

Educational Experience Reaching Out to CAJE

**by Joyce Levine, Librarian,
North Shore Hebrew Academy, &
Shelly Feit, Librarian, Moriah School**

This summer, teachers were on the receiving end of learning, at the first Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education (CAJE) Conference for Day School and Early Childhood Educators, held June 22-25, 2003, at Hofstra University in Hempstead, NY.

The program included two workshops presented by NYMA librarians. The elementary school panel, organized by Shelly Feit, librarian of the Moriah School in Englewood, NJ, also included Beth Anshen Braunstein of the SAR Academy in Riverdale, NY, and Rachel Glasser of the Yavneh Academy in Paramus, NJ. Their session, *Presenting the Wealth: Enhancing Teaching and Learning Through the Day School Library*, focused on tangible ways in which the day school library and librarian, as a partner in the educational program, offers critical support for the classroom teacher.

The high school panel, organized by Joyce Levine of North Shore Hebrew Academy High School in Great Neck, NY, included Faya Cohen of Manhattan High School for Girls in New York City, Anne Jaron of the Hebrew Academy in Nassau County (HANC) in Uniondale, NY, and Rachail Kurtz of the Yeshiva of Flatbush High School in Brooklyn. In their presentation, *Enriching the High School Curriculum: Your Librarian as a Partner in Teaching*, they discussed how the librarian can work with school personnel by increasing awareness of interpersonal relationships, enriching special programming in the day school and teaching research skills through

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From the President

I joined many intrepid NYMA members and braved the viral elements to travel to Toronto for the AJL National Convention. We were richly compensated with enlightening sessions, joyful reunions, and elegant dining in a beautiful setting. Deciding whether or not to attend this year was fraught with anxiety, and there was no right or wrong decision. We all hope, of course, that we will never have to face such a problem again -- certainly not next year, when we in the greater New York metropolitan area will be the hosts.

In anticipation of next year's celebration of the 350th anniversary of the settlement of Jews in America, our chapter co-hosted, together with the Professional Development and Continuing Education Committee of AJL, a conference on *Jewish Americana: Exploring Our Resources*. This symposium rounded out a year of stimulating workshops and conferences, all of which were not only well attended, but which also attracted many new participants. Librarians from as far away as Washington, D.C. and Maryland joined us for our Cataloging and Reference Workshops, as did a large group of librarians from Westchester, Long Island, and the five boroughs for our Day School/High School Workshop. Members of the New Jersey chapter have been more visible this year at NYMA functions, and we appreciate their participation.

This column is my last as president of the local chapter, and I am very happy to express my gratitude to all the hard-working board members for participating in meetings and for planning, arranging, and executing our programs. Some of our members were more visible, such as Elana Gensler and Roz Friedman, who coordinated the highly successful Day School/High School Workshop. Marlene Schiffman once again single-handedly marshaled expert catalogers to present at the Cataloging Workshop. Accolades go to them all, including our newest team, Ina Cohen and Rachail Kurtz, who produced an impressive Reference Workshop, and Hallie Cantor, who devotes much time and energy to editing this newsletter. I also thank all the behind-the-scenes board members, without whose help none of our programs would come to fruition: Julia Bock, our treasurer, who always quietly handles registration; Rita Lifton, who efficiently publicizes all NYMA functions; and Chaya Wiesman, our corresponding secretary, who also prepares our mailing labels and who had to stay abreast of all the additions to our membership roster. Shuli Berger, Edith Lubetski, Marion Stein, and Naomi Steinberger are all past presidents whose sound advice is greatly appreciated at board meetings. Contrary to the situation in most organizations, where the vice president is merely a figurehead, our vice president/president elect these past two years, Liza Stabler, was a most able assistant and a source of wise counsel. In addition, she and Congregation Emanu-El graciously hosted our board meetings numerous times, even amid increased security concerns. I am most gratified that Liza is our new president, and I wish her and NYMA *hatslaha rabbah*.

Susan (Shaindy) Kurzmann

Treasure Hunt Archive Perks & Quirks @ Ref Workshop by Steven Bernstein, Hebraic Catalog Librarian, Yale University

Finding and cataloging archives is like shopping at an antique store: you never know what will turn up.

The fine art of Jewish archives was the topic of this year's Reference Workshop, held Thursday, May 1, 2003, at the Yeshiva of Flatbush High School. Presenters were Shuli Berger, curator of Special Collections at Yeshiva University; Ellen Kastel, archivist at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and the Ratner Center for the Study of Conservative Judaism; and Bob Sink, Chief Archivist and Project Director at the Center for Jewish History. The program was coordinated by Rachail Kurtz of Yeshiva of Flatbush Library and Ina Rubin Cohen, of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

Both Shuli Berger and Ellen Kastel highlighted a few of the "treasures" that can be found in each of their archive collections. Here are some of the more interesting examples:

- *Letter signed by George Gershwin on his performance at the first annual Yeshiva University Women's Organization Concert in 1930;

- *Audio recording of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., speaking on behalf of Soviet Jewry;

- *Postcard from Solomon Schechter to his son, written during his famous expedition to the Cairo Genizah;

- *Cyrus Adler's Freemason regalia.

What is the most fun about working with an archive? "You never know what you're going to come up with," remarked Shuli and Ellen.

In *The Basics of Starting an Archive to Preserve Your Institution's History*, Bob Sink explained how working with archives requires that "you unlearn basic librarianship." However, archiving is quite exciting because "you get to play with good stuff." The session covered the basic principles, including arrangement, description, and preservation.

Arrangement – the process of bringing together sets of records derived from a common source which have common characteristics and a common file structure – should be done according to provenance, original order, context, and permanence. Once items are arranged they need to be described. Description should cover four primary aspects: title, date, quantity (in linear feet of shelf space), and contents.

Finally, and most importantly, an archive needs to be preserved. This requires awareness of certain "plagues," including acidic paper, environment (i.e. temperature, humidity, vermin, light, and pollution), disasters, and people. While it is important to protect the collection from all of these elements, it is not always financially practical to do so. The simplest and most inexpensive way to protect an archive, said Bob Sink, is to use acid-free paper and folders for collections.

While some of us may never have to get our hands dirty, so to speak, by discovering and restoring old or fragile materials, those who do can pride themselves on the craftsmanship which itself is a tremendous contribution to history. *Yasher koach* to this year's Reference Workshop, for a "true find" of a presentation. ☆

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“Your Tired, Your Poor, Your Huddled Masses . . .” & Other Wonders of Jewish Americana @Spring 2003 Conference

by Susan (Shaindy) Kurzmann, Reference & Cataloging Resource Librarian, Ramapo College

We can't boast of being on the Mayflower, but Jews had been a presence in America long before the ink on the Declaration of Independence was dry.

The history of Jews in the new republic was the topic of the Spring 2003 Conference. At *Jewish Americana: Exploring our Resources*, held May 29, at the Jewish Theological Seminary together with the Professional Development and Continuing Education Committee of AJL, New York academic and synagogue librarians joined with colleagues from Connecticut, New Jersey, Maryland, and Washington, D.C. A panel of three presented the background on library and archival collections and acquainted the audience with a treasure trove of material available through the Internet.

Roaming the Past

Lyn Slome, Director of the Library and Archives at the American Jewish Historical Society, addressed *Patterns of Immigration, Social and Cultural Change and Collecting in the Archives of the American Jewish Historical Society*. Her overview of the AJHS began with its founding in 1892 amid an atmosphere of anti-Semitism in the United States, coinciding with rising levels of immigration. At its inception, the Society's mission was to promote patriotism. Its current focus, as stated on its website: “to foster awareness and appreciation of the American Jewish past and to serve as a national scholarly resource for research through the collection, preservation and dissemination of materials relating to American Jewish History.”

American Jewish History (originally titled *American Jewish Historical Quarterly*), published by the Society, also reflects this evolving focus. Debuting in 1893, the journal's contents were based on the Society's annual meetings. Articles of contemporary historical interest were featured in the early 1900s. Despite financial setbacks, the journal continued to grow, and book reviews and scholarly articles were introduced. Originally, the Society concentrated on pre-Civil War materials and did not accept 20th century materials until the 1930s. Similarly, although it took longer, *American Jewish History* added articles on community history in the 1950s. The relationship between the United States and Israel was examined in the late 1970s. Today, the quarterly issues are often dedicated to a specific topic.

The American Jewish Historical Society's Industrial Removal Office, which existed from 1901 until 1921, when immigration was curtailed, endeavored to assimilate new Jewish immigrants, many of whom had settled on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, and to assist them to find employment. In the process, many of these immigrants were relocated far and wide across the country and found themselves in such unlikely destinations as Sheboygan, WI; Sioux City, IA; and Cripple Creek, CO. Records from the Industrial Removal Office offer much information, not only about the Jewish communities themselves, but also about relations between Jews and non-Jews throughout the U.S.

Ms. Slome touched upon the holdings of the AJHS-Archives, whose oldest document, dated 1590, is from the

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Up to Par Guide to Everything @Day School/High School Workshop by Roz Friedman, Librarian, Ma'ayanot

A taste of the library. And the web. Who can ask for anything more?

NYMA's Day School and High School Workshop, held March 5, 2003, at the Joseph Kushner Academy, offered three kinds of guides. The workshop, hosted by Leslie Monchar, included a tour through the academy's magnificent library, which services grades Pre-K through 12. Along the way she stopped to explain some of the architectural decisions that went into the design of her facility.

Rachel Glasser, Librarian at the Yavneh Academy in Paramus, NJ, spoke about standards for accreditation by the AJL. She stressed how this process helps to enhance the professionalism of the Jewish library. Her talk led to discussion of the self-study process some of us have undergone when our respective schools have been candidates for Middle States accreditation. Certainly, for many of us, AJL accreditation is an additional way to further our goal of peer recognition.

Joyce Levine, librarian at the New Shore Academy in Great Neck, spoke about online sources. The exposure to both electronic resources and library web sites is crucial for today's information specialists. Joyce eagerly shared her knowledge with those who are still computer-shy or ignorant of the vast world of the cyber-library.

The workshop was well attended, with 22 attendees, none of whom minded the traveling. Indeed, in addition to the New York crowd, the conference attracted a number of our Central New Jersey colleagues, who had never attended previously. It just goes to show how an above-average conference deserves “special credit.” ☆

Look What's Happening

UP TO GRADE

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY upgraded its YULIS catalog to the VTLIS Virtua system. The new YULIS is a Unicode-based system, thus offering correct display of Hebrew characters and of letters with diacritic marks. YULIS is now Z39.50 version 3 compliant and supports broadcast searching and data transfer.

Grateful acknowledgment is extended to METRO, the Metropolitan New York Library Council, for partial support of the upgrade through its Z39.50 Grant under the auspices of the New York State Regional Bibliographic Databases Program.

Adds **LIZA STABLER**: "YULIS was already a huge help to countless small Judaica libraries and their librarians. We are deeply indebted to **PEARL BERGER** for sharing [YU's] trove of Judaica knowledge with us. YU's superb cataloging will be even more helpful now that we are able to download the MARC records."

BEFORE 9/11

Late February 2003 marked the 10th anniversary of the first attack on the World Trade Center. Little did anyone know that it was only the beginning, and what the end would be.

Writing in early March on HaSafran, **ESTHER NUSSBAUM** remembers that event quite well:

"For AJL-NYMA, hosts of the 1993 convention in New York, it had additional impact. **EDITH LUBETSKI** and I, the co-chairs, and our wonderful committee were suddenly faced with having to find an alternative site for the convention. The original contract was with

the Vista Hotel in a high-rise that was part of the World Trade Center complex.

"The first mailings were about to go out with all the hotel details. The Vista's premises were badly damaged, but it was more than a week before the hotel managers confirmed that they would not be able to reopen for many, many months. It reopened over a year later with a different name and never did thrive.

"Edith and I and our committee were in a panic, and **NAOMI STEINBERGER**, our hotel arrangements chair, was unavailable due to [Tamar, her then eleven-year-old] daughter's being ill (with pneumonia.) With much scrambling about, and with the support of the Mayor's office, we were able to secure the NY Hilton at the same charge – their normal charge would have been unaffordable – and we went on to have a smashing success.

"AJL/NYMA were a phenomenal group. I couldn't help thinking about and reliving those moments last week."

STERLING PRESENTATION

RACHEL GLASSER was a panel member at the AJL 2003 Convention in Toronto. Topic: *Freshman Seminar II: More Information on the Fundamentals of Judaica Librarian, Part 4, Cataloging Principles*. This session included an explanation of the MARC record and an overview of the different classification systems for a Judaica Library (Library of Congress, Dewey, Weine, and Elazar). Participants had the opportunity to do some hands-on cataloging of actual books and figure out where they should be cataloged in their own library.

YASHER KOACH!

To **ROBERTA SALTZMAN** (left) for her Bibliographic Book Award, and **EDITH LUBETSKI** (center) for her Life Membership Award. Both awards were presented at the AJL National Convention 2003 in Toronto, by **PEARL BERGER** (right), AJL National President & fellow NYMA member.



NOW PLAYING

Latest exhibit at the **LIBRARY OF THE JEWISH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF AMERICA**: "Vote! Election Posters for the Zionist Congress," on view at the Goldman Gallery of the JTS until September 2003. Selections can be viewed online at: <http://www.jtsa.edu/library/exhib/zion/index.shtml>.

The JTS library is located at 3080 Broadway, at 122nd Street in New York City. Exhibition hours are Sunday from 12-7, Monday-Thursday, 9-6, and Friday 9-5.

WANTED: VOLUNTEERS

Got time? Ideas? AJL-NYMA is looking for participants for next year's AJL convention, to be held in New York City. Already in the wings Those interested may contact **ELANA GENSLER**: egensler@aol.com; or **LIZA STABLER**: lizastabler@yahoo.com.

CONGRATULATIONS

To **FRUMA MOHRER**, new Chief Archivist at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research. Formerly Acting Chief Archivist, Ms. Mohrer succeeds Mr. Marek Web, who has been appointed Senior Research Scholar at YIVO's Max Weinreich Center for Advanced Jewish Studies.

To **HALLIE (CHAYA SARA) CANTOR**, on her latest editorial achievement: *Illuminating Life's Journey*, published by Otsar Sifrei Lubavitch.

UPDATE

The e-mail-address of **INA RUBIN COHEN**, Access Services Library at the Jewish Theological Seminary, has been changed: incohen@jtsa.edu.

MAZEL TOV!

To **TZIVIA & ABRAHAM ATIK**, on the birth of their granddaughters: Galia Bruriah (May 10), parents Riva Atlas & David Atik; Tal Kinneret (Aug. 8), parents Shira Atik & Michael Rothberg.

To **EDITH & MEIR LUBETSKI** on the wedding of their daughter Leah to Ari Feldman.

To **SHAINDY (SUSAN) & MOISHE KURZMANN**, on the birth of their granddaughter, Daniella Hinda. Parents Hillel & Michal Kurzmann.

To **BRUCHIE (BETTY) & SAM WEINSTEIN**, on the wedding of their daughter Chedva to Chaim Tessler, AND the birth of their granddaughter Nechama. Parents Eli & Soroh Leah Weinstein.

May they all *schep nachas*.

CONDOLENCES

To **LINDA LERMAN**, on the death of her mother Arlene Lerman (Rachel bat Avraham ve-Tziporrah), z"l, 28 Adar I.

To **SHULI BERGER**, on the death of her father Bernard (Dov) Berger, 10 Sivan.

May they all be comforted among the mourners of Zion & Jerusalem.

CORRECTION

In the last issue of NYMA News the full names of the deceased parents of **LEAH MOSKOWITZ** were not printed: Solomon & Sarah Novogrodsky. *NYMA News* regrets the omission.

LIVE FROM TORONTO

- Left to right:
AVIVA ASTRINSKI,
PEARL BERGER,
RACHEL GLASSER,
ESTHER NUSSBAUM,
ROBERTA SALTZMAN,
CHAYA WIESMAN,
LIZA STABLER,
SHAINDY KURZMANN,
LEAH ADLER,
ELANA GENSLER,
MARLENE SCHIFFMAN,
STANLEY NECHAMIE,
EDITH LUBETSKI,
FAITH JONES.



The ABCs of KBM

Jewish & Civil Law @ Cataloging Workshop

by Daniel Lovins, Cataloger, Yale University

Librarians got plenty of legal aid and more at NYMA's Spring 2003 Cataloging Workshop, *It's the Law!: A "KBM" Production*, held Monday, March 31st, at NYU School of Law.

Opening the program was George Prager, Head of Cataloging, NYU School of Law. In his topic *ClassWeb Plus: Methodology for Using LC's Classification and Subject Headings*, he urged catalogers who want to continue using LC's electronic classification schedules to make the transition to LC's Classification Web ("ClassWeb," for short). The CD-ROM project "Classification Plus" is no longer supported, having received its final update in November 2002. While still considered a work in progress, ClassWeb is now the single most authoritative and up-to-date source for librarians to consult when making classification decisions.

Added Features

The new web version offers some significant advantages over the print and CD-ROM:

*Mounted on a Web server, ClassWeb is accessible from any web-enabled PC. There is no longer a need for special client software or manually-loaded patches and updates.

*It is now possible to submit broadcast searches across all schedules simultaneously.

*ClassWeb's "enhanced browser" can automatically combine schedule numbers with table numbers to generate fully-realized classification numbers.

*Catalogers can add local notes to schedules, and have them saved to a site-specific "cookie."

*Institutional subscribers can link

their OPACs to ClassWeb, with hyperlinks between them to facilitate navigation. However, since the Library of Congress has not yet linked its own OPAC to the database, this feature may be of limited use.

For those interested in trying out the service, a free one-month trial subscription is available from the CDS website. Annual subscriptions are \$375 for individual users with 20 hours per month online, \$570 for up to four concurrent users with unlimited hours, and \$700 for up to nine users, again with unlimited hours of access. A license agreement and order form are available on the CDS website.

Once an account has been activated, it is important to set up one's site-specific preferences. These settings will determine the defaults for all users at that site, though individuals may override these settings on a session-by-session basis. To change settings, go to Main Menu and select "Preferences." Specify, for example how many records you want to have displayed per page. Also, consider which of the available library OPACs should be hyperlinked to the ClassWeb databases. Under "Classification Browser Options," select something other than "Standard Browser," since this is too limited for cataloging purposes. You may find that the "Hierarchy browser" works best for searching through multiple levels of classification. Also, you are encouraged to select "Frames" rather than "non-Frames" for display of Web pages.

With respect to end-user support, you may subscribe to a discussion list maintained by CDS, where questions or comments may be addressed. Paul Weiss and others involved with administration

of ClassWeb have committed themselves to answering all queries.

Seek & Find

After discussion of user preferences and supports, Mr. Prager provided some searching examples. Starting with a call number search in the standard classification browser, it is possible to see how ClassWeb can generate classification numbers automatically from tables, and how relevant subject headings can be identified using ClassWeb's built-in "crosswalks" to LCSH. Local notes can also be added to a schedule, e.g., the comment "HJ2051.A59 is obsolete, use above number" can be set into an appropriate place in the H schedule. Bella Hass Weinberg suggested that obsolete class numbers could also be indicated directly in the ClassWeb central database, thus obviating the need for libraries to add them individually. Still, other types of added notes might truly be institution specific.

Mr. Prager explained the function of alphabetic codes appearing beside each class web caption: clicking "H" brings up the classification hierarchy; "R," the classification record; "B," the bibliographic records containing current class number; "L," the LC subject heads for the number; "S," subject correlations for the number; "N," local notes; "C," current data in classification browser; and "T," the secondary tables.

Legal Ease

Part Two, *Law and Religion: LC's New Schedule for Jewish Law*, featured panelists Aaron Kuperman, Subject Cataloger, Law Team, Social Sciences Cataloging Division, Library Congress;

and Elisheva Schwartz, Cataloger, NYU School of Law. While the distinction between civil law and ritual law does not appear – indeed, does not make sense – in classical Jewish sources, it has, for the past hundred years or so, proven useful to scholars of the Western legal tradition. This division places *halakhic* literature into categories analogous to those used for Western Europe and other legal traditions, and therefore facilitates the study of comparative law, as well as source analysis for American law.

Jewish civil law, also known as *Mishpat Ivri*, has been defined by Menachem Elon as “those aspects of *halakhah* that a Western-trained lawyer says is law.” According to the knowledgeable and entertaining Aaron Kuperman, the term *Mishpat Ivri* has been established as an LC subject heading, and serves as a de facto caption for the KBM schedule. Moreover, since the Library of Congress is beholden mostly to the needs of American legislators, rather than those of rabbis and theologians, this admittedly artificial distinction is useful for LC’s mission.

The KBM class was designed to be as non-disruptive as possible. BM and KBM have been synchronized up to number 524, so that, for example, BM50, “Encyclopedia and Dictionaries on Judaism” (under “Judaism”), can be reclassified KBM50, “Encyclopedias and dictionaries on Judaism” (under Jewish law”), changing perhaps the local bibliographic context of the work, but not exactly the meaning of its classification. This harmonization of the schedules has been done for the sake of LC and institutions such as the NYU law library, for whom general Judaica holdings have but an ancillary role to their collections of *Mishpat Ivri*.

For law libraries, the ability to class all Judaic texts in KBM allows for a single integrated collection of Judaic law and its sources. For non-law

libraries receiving LC copy, however, the advent of KBM may have the opposite (i.e. dis-integrating) effect. General Judaica will continue to be classed in BM while *Mishpat Ivri* items will now be classified in KBM. The result may be a physical separation of materials that have closely related subjects.

Le’Havdil!

From KBM524 onward, class numbers are largely arranged parallel with schedules from other religious traditions. For example, “KBM3000 Police and Public Safety [in Jewish law]” is parallel to “KBP3000 Police and Public safety [in Islamic law].” This kind of class number arrangement, along with the harmonization of captions, should prove useful to those studying comparative law.

It is important to distinguish Israeli law (KMK) from non-jurisdictional Jewish civil law (KBM), Jewish ritual law (BM [or KBM]), and Western-American law based on *halakhah*. The New York State *get* (religious divorce) laws, for example, should be classified somewhere in KFN5001-6199.5 (laws for the State of New York), not in BM or KMK. If a state law validates a *halakhic* law, then materials about it should be classified by that place. In other words, its identity as “law of the land” should take precedence over its other functions. In general, classification decisions for law books should follow the perspective and interest of an American or Western-oriented lawyer.

Code of Jewish Law

There are a few additional points to keep in mind:

The term “code” means different things in different contexts. In the Western legal tradition, a code is a list of all currently valid laws for a given jurisdiction. Since Jewish law theoretically never changes, it can be said to possess only one such code. The works of Jacob ben Asher and Joseph

Caro, then, would be considered merely “digests” or “restatements” of a single unchanging code. It is also worth remembering that the law of Israel prior to 70 CE is considered “ancient Biblical” and therefore gets classified in KBM (rather than KMK). Also keep in mind that if a subject heading includes “– Biblical teaching” or “– Religious life,” the item in hand is probably not a candidate for KBM.

When applying Western legal categories to Jewish literature, the word “code” can become problematic. For the Roman legalist Justinian, and so too for the modern State of New York, “code” means the “law of the empire,” and as such can be completely rewritten if so desired. By contrast, the “code” in Jewish law, e.g. Joseph Caro’s *Shulhan Arukh*, is merely an unofficial restatement of a theoretically unchanging and unchangeable doctrine. Care must be taken, therefore, that classification language is used consistently across the different legal traditions.

“Choice” Matters

Outside of LC, libraries are making their own decisions about how much of KBM, if any, should be applied to their collection. Elisheva Schwartz mentioned the earlier policy at NYU of putting all Jewish law in either KMK (Laws of State of Israel) or BM (Judaism), rather than using the inchoate KBM numbers. This is now changing, as NYU and UC Berkeley law libraries have become something like “implementation sites” for the new class. Moreover, a certain portion of NYU’s materials on ancient Israeli law will be reclassified from BS (e.g. Law in the Bible) to KBM.

While some may find this alphabet soup hard to swallow, the change in cataloging laws reflect the growing complexity and interdependence of Jewish and secular worlds. A *yasher koach* to the workshop panel, for helping to bring catalogers up to date. ☆

Little Man, Big Mission Founder of NYPL Jewish Division Honored

By Reva G. Kirschberg, Secretary of the Harry G. Friedman Society of Judaica Collectors

If it takes an extraordinary man to create an extraordinary institute, then the New York Public Library is not only honored but supported by the memory of many giants.

One of them was Abraham Solomon Freidus. On May 11, 2003, Michael Terry, Librarian of the Jewish Division of the New York Public Library, gave a passionate talk on Freidus, Librarian and Founder of the Jewish Book Division at the New York Public Library. Born in 1867 in Riga, the capital of Latvia and home to a rare assortment of contemporary Jewish scholars and authors, Freidus was a protégé at the yeshiva he attended as a small boy and the first Jew to attend university in Russia.

Freidus emigrated first to Paris, where he peddled candy and served as a reporter of *Haeretz*. He then traveled to Zikhron Yaakov, a Palestinian agricultural settlement established by Lord Rothschild as a place to learn practical Zionism. He returned to Paris, then went to London, and finally arrived in New York, in 1889. Still bitterly poor, Freidus peddled keys for his locksmith brother on the East Side streets, then went to live at a Baron De Hirsch agricultural community in Woodbine, N.J.

He returned to New York and attended Pratt Institute, the first library school in New York, where he was professionally certified. In 1894, Freidus became librarian of the Calumet Society, an upper-class private club on Fifth Avenue, and then at the General Theological Seminary before being appointed chief librarian in 1897 of the Jewish Division at the newly merged Astor and Lenox Libraries, now known as the New York Public Library.

For the next 25 years, Terry claimed that New York was the center of Jewish studies, as Eastern Europe Jewry was preoccupied due to the chaos of pogroms, emigration, World

War I, and the *aliyah* of young Jews to Palestine. Freidus, with his voluminous bibliographic knowledge, made the New York Public Library reading room the center of activity and study. It was a place where everyone met to talk, read, and write. Social life was continued at the nearby Astor Library.

Freidus was personally modest and well liked by everyone. His work was central to everything that was done there, including the production of the *Jewish Encyclopedia*, published in 1906. He was described as a peculiar-looking man, one who was always poor, yet who smiled all of the time and spoke little. He kept clippings in his pockets about every celebrity of the day, which he always had on hand whenever he met someone famous.

The area of the library – and Freidus' domain – were guarded and promoted by Colonel John Shaw Billings, who after a brilliant military career became head of the New York Public Library. Freidus funneled contributions from Jacob Schiff into the Jewish Division, and kept it specifically as a library of Judaica and Hebraica, including Yiddish works, as opposed to a general Semitics and Near Eastern section. During this period, the library grew to over 20,000 books and papers. Freidus created the classification system for Judaica that was used universally by libraries until the modern period. It is still used in many areas.

After his death in 1923, very large amounts of material about Freidus were published in memorial books and various articles, including in 1929 *Studies in Jewish Bibliography*, dedicated to the memory of Abraham Solomon Freidus.

The Judaica world lost a great figure. But the New York Public Library lives on, the Jewish Division a testament to this leader's achievement. A *yasher koach* to Michael Terry, for honoring the memory of a professional giant. ☆

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Internet databases and school library websites.

In both programs, the presenters cited particular examples of services they have directed through which the quality of education was enhanced and enriched. The panel-ists were gratified by the high interest exhibited by members of the audience and the questions and responses generated.

This outreach to educators was initiated by Pearl Berger, Dean of Libraries at Yeshiva University and President of AJL. Both panels were coordinated by Edith Lubetski, Head Librarian, Yeshiva University, Stern College for Women. ☆

COMMENTS? IDEAS? SUGGESTIONS?

Or professional news about yourself?

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Jewish Americana, cont'd from Pg. 3)

Mexican Inquisition. Skipping two centuries, there is material from American Sephardic communities, including the early papers of New York's Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, Congregation Shearith Israel. More than 5,000 photos, many of which are embedded in the archive's discrete collections, portray Jewish life in America, and are frequently requested by scholars and lay people alike.

Facts & Artifacts

The second speaker, Ari Kinsberg, Research Associate of the Special Collections of the Library of the JTS, discussed *Early Hebrew Culture in America in the Special Collections of the Jewish Theological Seminary*. Mr. Kinsberg displayed slides of selected items from the Special Collections, including a 1650 poem by Rabbi Aboab of Brazil, extolling the defeat of the Portuguese by the Dutch; a 1761-1766 English translation of the prayer book by Isaac Pinto of New York; and items from the Cohen collection of Baltimore, whose family members were advocates of Jewish rights in Maryland in the 19th century.

In conjunction with the images displayed, Mr. Kinsberg interjected many fascinating details about Jewish life in America, from the surprisingly high level of Hebrew literacy in New York in the 1700s, to information about Jewish immigrants to the United States, among whom were Hebraists, Zionists, and even, unfortunately, common criminals. A minuscule traveler's prayer-book, just 1½" in size, was reprinted in Europe in 1849 and 1860, specifically for those about to cross the Atlantic. Judah Vistinevsky, a native of Lithuania, mailed a letter written in Hebrew to President Grover Cleveland in the late 1800s. Joseph Rubin, of Dallas, wrote a 35-page letter, also in Hebrew, to "the President and Parliament."

As Mr. Kinsberg pointed out, the state of Hebrew culture, which was fairly dismal in the 1800s, showed a marked improvement in the 20th century. During the First World War, when many European printing houses were closed, Hebrew publishing began to burgeon in the United States. In 1918, the Iggud HaRabanim, Union of Rabbis of the United States and Canada, collaborated to publish a new edition of the Talmud. Although this project proved to be a financial failure, the complete 18-volume folio set was finally completed, and hundreds of copies were disseminated. The next two complete American editions of the Talmud, one of which was published by the United States Army, appeared during World War II.

Web Research & Resources

The viewing of these items from the JTS Special Collections primed AJL members to find out about research on the Web. In *Jewish Americana: Hidden Treasures on the Internet*, Diane Romm, author of *The Jewish Guide to the*

Internet, distributed a list of online resources which were divided into three categories: general reference resources, online exhibits, and biographical information. In addition, Ms. Romm made several recommendations for libraries to obtain space online to post their own website.

The Jewish Virtual Library, previously known as the Jewish Student Online Research Center (www.us-israel.org/), offers a wide variety of searchable material, with links to numerous subject areas such as history, the Holocaust, Israel, and Judaic treasures at the Library of Congress. Statistical information, compiled from the 1971, 1990, and 2000-2001 National Jewish Population Surveys, is also available through the North American Jewish Data Bank (www.jewishdatabank.com/index.html), a joint project of the United Jewish Communities and City University of New York.

Second Avenue Online (www.yap.cat.nyu.edu), the Yiddish Theater Digital Archives, did not display properly on the day of our conference but is a wonderful site, full of information about the American Yiddish theater. The Fenster Museum of Jewish Art, in Tulsa, OK, with its emphasis on Jews in the West, offers various online exhibits. The Virtual Archive of the Jewish Women's Archive (www.jwa.org/archive/), has a user-friendly interface, and is, as stated on their website, "the centerpiece of JWA's effort to recover and make accessible the rich history of Jewish women."

Of Special Interest

Returning from cyberspace, AJL members were offered a tour of the JTS Special Collections by its librarian, Rabbi Jerry Schwarzbard. The oldest item is a 15th century astronomical table, a translation of which is purported to have been used by Christopher Columbus. Also shown were European books from the 16th and 17th centuries that mention America, and South Carolina paper currency from 1777 that had some Hebrew lettering, possibly used as an anti-counterfeiting measure. A letter from Hayim Solomon, one of the financiers of the American Revolution, requesting permission for Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Lazarus, the great-grandparents of Emma Lazarus, to come ashore, is a poignant reminder of the difficulties of Jewish immigration.

Some examples of ephemera depicting political and social life in the United States are greeting and tobacco cards. One greeting card portrayed Jews already on the shores of the United States, welcoming East European Jews, with the American eagle hovering overhead, ready to defend all Americans. The tobacco cards on display depicted boxers, several of whom were Jewish.

These mementos, together with the information garnered from the speakers' presentation on resources real and virtual, were a fitting prelude to next year's anticipated celebration of the 350th anniversary of Jewish settlement in America. ☆