



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE  
**AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES**

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**A Finding Aid to the  
Bella W. Rosenbaum Papers**

**Manuscript Collection No. 179**



## Collection Summary

<b>Title</b>	Bella W. Rosenbaum Papers
<b>Dates</b>	1896-1955
<b>Collection Number</b>	MS-179
<b>Repository</b>	The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
<b>Creator</b>	Rosenbaum, Bella Weretnikow, 1880-1960
<b>Extent</b>	0.4 linear feet (1 Hollinger box)
<b>Language of the Material</b>	English

## Administrative Information

### Biographical Sketch

Bella Weretnikow Rosenbaum was born 15 August 1880 in the Russian town of Kamenets-Podolski close to the Polish border. Her mother worked in a "hair shop" making wigs (sheitlen) while her father was a Judaic studies student (Yeshiva Bocher). In 1882, the Weretnikows with the help of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society immigrated to America but settled in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. Bella attended the local public schools as well as a cheder. In 1893, when Bella was thirteen, the family relocated to Seattle where Bella entered high school. The entire time Bella attended school and later college, she assisted her mother who had established a store on the Seattle waterfront. At the age of sixteen, Bella sat for the entrance exams at the University of Washington. In 1900, she was awarded her Bachelor of Arts degree and in 1901 her Bachelor of Law degree. She was in the first graduating class of the University's new law school and the first female Jewish lawyer in the state of Washington.

After a brief notice about Bella appeared in the American Israelite, Bella received a letter from a Tennessee lawyer named Lewis N. (L.N.) Rosenbaum. He congratulated her and requested information about Seattle. He eventually moved to Seattle and in 1905 L.N. and Bella were married. Following her marriage, Bella gave up the practice of law to raise the Rosenbaum's five children.

By 1914, from an office on Wall Street, L.N. had entered the world of finance and real estate, relocating his family to New York City. Besides caring for her children, Bella was active in civic and community affairs. In the 1920s the family returned to Seattle for a few years, but after the stock market crash in 1929, they moved back to New York City. Wherever they lived, the Rosenbaums were members of a Reform or Conservative synagogue. L.N. died in 1955, and Bella passed away on 17 December 1960.

### Scope and Content

The Bella W. Rosenbaum Papers detail biographical information about Bella Weretnikow Rosenbaum and her family. Bella Rosenbaum's children donated a copy of Rosenbaum's autobiography, which was published in excerpt form in the American Jewish Archives Journal in April, 1967. The manuscript in its entirety is included in the papers. Bella Rosenbaum's manuscript focuses on her early years as an immigrant from Russia in both Winnipeg, Manitoba and Seattle, Washington. She also details life as a Brooklyn housewife in an Orthodox Jewish community. There are relatively few references to her experience as a lawyer. The papers also contain the biography Rosenbaum wrote about the family history of her husband Lewis Newman Rosenbaum.

Bella Rosenbaum, while living in Brooklyn, New York, wrote a series of fictional stories about Jewish family life. These manuscripts are handwritten and it is not known whether they were ever published. There are also a few nonfiction pieces.

### Terms of Access

The collection is open for use; no restrictions apply.

### Terms of Reproduction and Use

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### Preferred Citation

Footnotes and bibliographic references should refer to the Bella W. Rosenbaum Papers and the American Jewish Archives. A suggestion for at least the first citation is as follows:

[Description], [Date], Box #, Folder #. MS-179. Bella W. Rosenbaum Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

## **Index Terms**

**Subjects** Jewish lawyers / Jewish women / Jews -- New York (State) -- New York / Jews -- Washington (State) -- Seattle / Women authors

**Personal Names** Rosenbaum, Bella Weretnikow, 1880-1960 / Rosenbaum, Lewis Newman, 1881-1956

**Media** Autobiographies / Biographies / Diaries

## **Series A. General, 1896-1961**

### **Box and Folder Listing**

Box 1. Folder 1. Diary, 1896

Box 1. Folder 2. My Life [autobiography], 1955

Box 1. Folder 3. Rosenbaum, Lewis N. [biography], undated

Box 1. Folder 4. Writings, A-L, undated

Box 1. Folder 5. Writings, M-Z, undated