

A Finding Aid to the Fanny E. Holtzmann Papers

Manuscript Collection No. 84



Collection Summary

Title	Fanny E. Holtzmann Papers
Dates	1920-1980
Collection Number	MS-84
Repository	The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
Creator	Holtzmann, Fanny E., 1902-1980
Extent	7.6 linear feet (19 Hollinger boxes)
Language of the Material	English, French, German, and Hebrew

Administrative Information

Biographical Sketch

Fanny Ellen Holtzmann (1895-1980) was a lawyer who specialized in motion picture and copyright cases, and who counted among her friends and clients such famous personalities as George Bernard Shaw, Gertrude Lawrence, Noel Coward, Clifton Webb and Fred Astaire, as well as the cream of British nobility.

Fanny Holtzmann was not born into the wealthy social circles which she ultimately came to know. Born into a large family on Eastern Parkway in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, the daughter of a school teacher, Fanny Holtzmann, at an early age, came to love and respect the traditions of Jewish life and religion taught her by "Zayde," her deeply religious grandfather.

She dropped out of high school after three years, but managed to earn a law degree from Fordham University in 1922, the only woman in her night school class, while working as a clerk in a theatrical law form. The following year she rented her office in the Bar Building on West 44th Street in New York City two weeks before her bar examination and opened for business half an hour after passing it.

Fanny Holtzmann already had a lucrative law practice spreading west to Hollywood and east to London when she catapulted to international fame in 1934 during a sensational trial in the British capital. That case pitted Russian nobility against Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures in a dispute over the studio's film version of the stabbing of Rasputin, the "mad monk" who had gained a sinister influence over the Romanov's pre-Revolutionary court before being killed in 1916.

The plaintiff was Princess Irina Alexandrovna Youssoupoff, the wife of Prince Felix, one of the noblemen who poisoned, shot, clubbed and drowned the monk in Petrograd. It was her contention that the film gave the impression that she had been intimate with Rasputin. She was awarded \$125,000 in damages for the showing of the film in Britain.

Fanny Holtzmann, who did not appear at the original London trial, a few months later reached a settlement on behalf of the princess in the suits that were pending in most of the countries where the film was shown. The settlement was for a sum well into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. From that time, Miss Holtzmann's legal prominence was assured and she became even more sought after as a lawyer in Hollywood.

But she did not limit herself to the entertainment field. Through her European clients she learned of Hitler's early atrocities and convinced the U.S. Immigration Service to permit more Jews into the country. She solicited money to ensure the immigrants would not become dependent upon public funds. Although she was able to save hundreds of persons, Miss Holtzmann's own relatives died in concentration camps.

At the first United Nations conference in San Francisco, she was principal U.S. counsel to the Republic of China and assisted China in becoming one of the five countries with veto power. She also used her influence to gain the support of a number of smaller non-aligned nations for the admission of Israel into the United Nations.

On January 18, 1980 Fanny Holtzmann was awarded an honorary doctorate of humane letters from the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in a bedside ceremony. Three weeks later, on February 7, she died of cancer.

(This biographical sketch drew heavily from obituaries that appeared in the New York Times and the Los Angeles Times in February, 1980.)

Scope and Content	Correspondence, newsclippings, legal materials, photographs, awards and miscellaneous items relating to Miss Holtzmann's legal career representing, among others, Chiang Kai-shek, W. Somerset Maugham, Nicholas II, and Prince Felix Youssoupoff. Correspondents include Chester Bowles, George Bush, Clementine Spencer Churchill, Hamilton Fish, Lord Halifax, V.E. Wellington Koo, George Bernard Shaw and Adlai E. Stevenson.
Arrangement	Organized into four (4) series: A. Correspondence, 1922-1979; B. Subject Materials, 1938-1975; C. Legal Materials, 1920-1969; D. Personal, 1927-1980.
Copies	Available in microfilm; Available in repository to qualified users; AJA microfilm nos. 3317-3333.
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Preferred Citation	Footnotes and bibliographic references should refer to the Fanny E. Holtzmann Papers and the American Jewish Archives. A suggestion for at least the first citation is as follows:
	[Description], [Date], Box #, Folder #. MS-84. Fanny E. Holtzmann Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.
Provenance	Received from Fanny E. Holtzmann in 1978. Additional supplements presented by the Holtzmann estate in 1980 and 1981.
Processing Information	Processed by Kevin Proffitt, April 1981.

Index Terms

Subjects Jewish women / Practice of law / Women lawyers
 Personal Names Bowles, Chester, 1901-1986 / Bush, George, 1924- / Chiang, Kai-shek, 1887-1975 / Churchill, Clementine Lady, 1885-1977 / Fish, Hamilton, 1888-1991 / Halifax, Edward Frederick Lindley Wood Earl of, 1881-1959 / Holtzmann, Fanny E. (Fanny Ellen), 1902-1980 / Koo, V. K. Wellington, 1888-1985 / Maugham, W. Somerset (William Somerset), 1874-1965 / Nicholas II, Emperor of Russia, 1868-1918 / Shaw, George Bernard, 1856-1950 / Stevenson, Adlai E. (Adlai Ewing), 1900-1965 / Youssoupoff, Felix, Prince, 1887-1967
 Media Photographs

Series A. Correspondence, 1922-1979

Extent 4.2 linear feet (10.5 Hollinger boxes)

Arrangement

The series is divided into two (2) sub-series: 1. Personal; 2. Organizational.

Subseries 1. Personal, 1922-1979, undated

Extent 3.6 linear feet (9 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note Consists of correspondence and some reports, articles, and newsclippings.

ArrangementThe correspondence is arranged alphabetically by the name of the person. The letters
are arranged chronologically within each folder.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 1. Folder 1. A, General. Box 1. Folder 2. Achlilles, Theodore C., 1945-1962, undated Box 1. Folder 3. Alexander-Sinclair, John, 1951-1977 Box 1. Folder 4. Amigam, Eliyahu, 1963-1973 Box 1. Folder 5. Anspacher, Carolyn, 1952-1970 Box 1. Folder 6. Arnon, Michael, 1966-1969 Box 1. Folder 7. Astley, Philip, 1952-1974 Box 1. Folder 8. Duchess of Atholl, 1930-1938 Box 1. Folder 9. Duchess of Atholl, 1939-1957, undated Box 1. Folder 10. Ba-Bi, General. Box 1. Folder 11. Baring, George R. S., 1970-1971 Box 1. Folder 12. Barton, Bruce, 1939-1958, undated Box 1. Folder 13. Beame, Abraham, 1965-1977 Box 1. Folder 14. Beauchamp, Antony, 1954-1956 Box 1. Folder 15. Beausset, Connie and Valery de, 1953-1968, undated Box 1. Folder 16. Belk, Samuel, 1965 Box 1. Folder 17. Beruh, Joseph, 1973-1976 Box 1. Folder 18. Biddle, Anthony J., 1952-1961 Box 1. Folder 19. Bl-Bu, General. Box 1. Folder 20. Blair, William M., 1951-1961 Box 1. Folder 21. Bowles, Chester, 1952-1960 Box 1. Folder 22. Brandt, Harry N., 1962-1969 Box 1. Folder 23. Brashier, Hunter, 1971 Box 1. Folder 24. Breitel, Charles D., 1946-1950 Box 1. Folder 25. Brin, Alexander, 1948-1950 Box 1. Folder 26. Bromfield, Louis, 1939 Box 1. Folder 27. Bromfield, Louis, 1940-1963, undated Box 1. Folder 28. Brown, Clarence, 1950-1956 Box 1. Folder 29. Brown, Oliver, 1949 Box 1. Folder 30. Burling, Edward, 1971-1977 Box 1. Folder 31. Burns, Arthur F., 1953-1978 Box 1. Folder 32. Bush, George, 1971-1975 Box 2. Folder 1. Ca, General. Box 2. Folder 2. Cane, Melville H., 1971-1974 Box 2. Folder 3. Carey, James B., 1943-1962 Box 2. Folder 4. Carlisle, Peter, 1956-1964 Box 2. Folder 5. Castle, Molly, 1943, undated

Box 2. Folder 6. Cavanaugh, Edward F., 1954-1962 Box 2. Folder 7. Ch-Cu, General. Box 2. Folder 8. Chang, P. H., 1946-1947 Box 2. Folder 9. Churchill, Clementine Spencer, 1955-1974 Box 2. Folder 10. Churchill, Randolph, 1954-1957 Box 2. Folder 11. Churchill, Sarah, 1952-1977 Box 2. Folder 12. Cobey, Herbert, 1950-1951 Box 2. Folder 13. Cohen, Saul, 1962 Box 2. Folder 14. Coward, Noel, 1940-1973, undated Box 2. Folder 15. Cowen, William, 1949-1952 Box 2. Folder 16. Countess of Cromer, 1939-1957 Box 2. Folder 17. Earl of Cromer, 1934-1936 Box 2. Folder 18. Earl of Cromer, 1937-1939 Box 2. Folder 19. Earl of Cromer, 1940-1946 Box 2. Folder 20. D, General. Box 2. Folder 21. Delacorte, George T., 1971-1979 Box 2. Folder 22. Dickson-Wright, Arthur, 1961-1968, undated Box 2. Folder 23. Donald, W. H., 1945 Box 2. Folder 24. Drayton, John A., 1966-1969 Box 2. Folder 25. Dulles, Allen W., 1952-1968 Box 3. Folder 1. E, General. Box 3. Folder 2. Eban, Abba, 1963-1972 Box 3. Folder 3. Edwards, William P. N., 1945-1948 Box 3. Folder 4. Eisenhower, Dwight D., 1947-1969 Box 3. Folder 5. Elath, Eliahu, 1953-1962 Box 3. Folder 6. F, General. Box 3. Folder 7. Finkelstein, Louis, 1957-1969 Box 3. Folder 8. Fish, Hamilton, 1967-1968 Box 3. Folder 9. Fish, Hamilton, 1969-1973 Box 3. Folder 10. Fish, Hamilton, 1974-1978, undated Box 3. Folder 11. Fish, Hamilton Jr., 1970-1974 Box 3. Folder 12. Fleischmann, Julius, 1954-1961 Box 3. Folder 13. Fortas, Abe, 1947-1973 Box 3. Folder 14. Foster, John, 1940-1941 Box 3. Folder 15. Foster, John, 1942-1956 Box 3. Folder 16. Frankfurter, Felix, 1939-1960 Box 3. Folder 17. Frederick, Prince of Prussia, 1934-1939, undated Box 3. Folder 18. G, General.

Box 3. Folder 19. King George of Greece, 1934-1954

Box 3. Folder 20. Getts, Clark H., 1936-1940 Box 3. Folder 21. Giles, Dorothy, 1954 Box 3. Folder 22. Gould, Bruce, 1945-1971 Box 3. Folder 23. Goulding, Edmund, 1922-1955, undated Box 3. Folder 24. Goulding, Edmund, 1956-1960, undated Box 3. Folder 25. Gregory, Horace, 1948-1971 Box 4. Folder 1. H, General. Box 4. Folder 2. Hackett, Francis, 1936-1937 Box 4. Folder 3. Hackett, Francis, 1939 Box 4. Folder 4. Hackett, Francis, 1940-1961, undated Box 4. Folder 5. Lord Halifax, 1939-1946 Box 4. Folder 6. Hiss, Alger, 1975-1976, undated Box 4. Folder 7. Hollister, John B., 1955 Box 4. Folder 8. Holtzmann, Elizabeth, 1972-1978 Box 4. Folder 9. Hoover, J. Edgar, 1942 Box 4. Folder 10. Hsu, Leonard S., 1963-1964 Box 4. Folder 11. Hussey, Harry, 1943-1945 Box 4. Folder 12. Hussey, Harry, 1946-1947 Box 4. Folder 13. Hussey, Harry, 1948-1950 Box 4. Folder 14. Hussey, Harry, 1951-1961, undated Box 5. Folder 1. I-J, General. Box 5. Folder 2. Lord Inverchapel, 1946-1947 Box 5. Folder 3. Jackson, C. D., 1953-1963 Box 5. Folder 4. Josephson, Sam, 1951-1953 Box 5. Folder 5. Lord Jowitt, 1953 Box 5. Folder 6. K, General. Box 5. Folder 7. Kadoorie, Lawrence, 1953-1977 Box 5. Folder 8. Kahler, Hugh M., 1945-1946, undated Box 5. Folder 9. Koch, Edward I., 1971 Box 5. Folder 10. Koo, Hui-Lan (Madame Wellington), 1946-1962, undated Box 5. Folder 11. Koo, Hui-Lan (Madame Wellington). Clippings. Box 5. Folder 12. Koo, V. K. Wellington, 1943-1945 Box 5. Folder 13. Koo, V. K. Wellington, 1946-1947 Box 5. Folder 14. Koo, V. K. Wellington, 1948-1949 Box 5. Folder 15. Koo, V. K. Wellington, 1950-1978 Box 5. Folder 16. Koo Family, 1946-1956 Box 5. Folder 17. Kuhn, Irene, 1943-1946 Box 5. Folder 18. L, General.

Box 5. Folder 19. Lawrence, Gertrude, 1941-1968

Box 5. Folder 20. Lesley, Cole, 1968-1977 Box 5. Folder 21. LeVane, Ethel, 1954 Box 5. Folder 22. Lindsay, John V., 1969 Box 5. Folder 23. Linton, Ovor, 1949-1958 Box 5. Folder 24. Lodge, John D. Biography, clippings. Box 5. Folder 25. Lodge, John D., 1965-1966 Box 5. Folder 26. Lodge, John D., 1967 Box 5. Folder 27. Lodge, John D., 1968-1973, undated Box 5. Folder 28. Lykourezos, Alexandre, 1965-1968 Box 6. Folder 1. Ma-Mi, General. Box 6. Folder 2. Maugham, Somerset and Syrie, 1949-1968 Box 6. Folder 3. Mbekeani, Nyemba, 1967-1968 Box 6. Folder 4. McBain, Hughston M., 1947-1958 Box 6. Folder 5. McCall A., 1946-1947 Box 6. Folder 6. McNaughton, Glen, 1970 Box 6. Folder 7. Meridor, Yaacov, 1963-1964 Box 6. Folder 8. Mills, A. K., 1939 Box 6. Folder 9. Mo-My, General. Box 6. Folder 10. Molyneux, Edward, 1949-1966, undated Box 6. Folder 11. Montoya, Joseph M., 1965-1973 Box 6. Folder 12. Morgan, Frederick, 1946-1957 Box 6. Folder 13. Morgan, Frederick, 1962-1966 Box 6. Folder 14. Morgan, Frederick. Autobiography. Box 6. Folder 15. Morgan, Louise, 1951-1958 Box 6. Folder 16. Murphy, Robert, 1953-1965 Box 6. Folder 17. Murray, Phillip, 1942-1948 Box 6. Folder 18. N, General. Box 6. Folder 19. Nabokov, Nicholas, 1961 Box 6. Folder 20. Nehru, S. S., 1959 Box 6. Folder 21. Niven, David, 1959-1976 Box 6. Folder 22. O, General. Box 6. Folder 23. Ormerod, Berkley, 1946-1979 Box 6. Folder 24. P, General. Box 6. Folder 25. Peake, Charles, 1941 Box 6. Folder 26. Peled, Shlomo, 1953-1963 Box 6. Folder 27. Proxmire, William, 1965-1977 Box 7. Folder 1. R, General. Box 7. Folder 2. Ramsbotham, Peter, 1974-1976 Box 7. Folder 3. Revici, Emanuel, 1954-1972

Box 7. Folder 4. Revici, Emanuel. Regarding Melinda Harold, 1948-1968, undated Box 7. Folder 5. Revici, Emanuel (subject), 1952-1966 Box 7. Folder 6. Revici, Emanuel. Studies, reports, writings. Box 7. Folder 7. Revici, Emanuel. Clippings. Box 7. Folder 8. Rickett, F. William, 1935-1951 Box 7. Folder 9. Rickett, F. William, 1970-1978 Box 7. Folder 10. Rifkind, Simkon H, 1949-1976 Box 7. Folder 11. Roosevelt, Eleanor, 1946-1954, undated Box 7. Folder 12. Rosen, Leonard, 1968-1969 Box 7. Folder 13. Rosenfeld, Aaron, 1963 Box 7. Folder 14. Lord Rothchild, 1939 Box 7. Folder 15. Rousseau, Anne, 1964 Box 7. Folder 16. Duchess of Rutland, 1925-1938 Box 7. Folder 17. Sa, General. Box 7. Folder 18. Sachar, A. L., 1957 Box 7. Folder 19. Sachs, Alexander, 1945-1946 Box 7. Folder 20. Sargent, Noel, 1950-1974 Box 8. Folder 1. Sc-Se, General. Box 8. Folder 2. Scully, Frank, 1945-1949 Box 8. Folder 3. Scully, Frank, 1950-1964 Box 8. Folder 4. Seltzovsky, C. N., 1956-1965 Box 8. Folder 5. Sh-Sk, General. Box 8. Folder 6. Shapiro, Donald, 1967-1976 Box 8. Folder 7. Shaw, G. Bernard, 1943-1948 Box 8. Folder 8. Shaw, G. Bernard, 1949-1950, undated Box 8. Folder 9. Shaw, G. Bernard (subject), 1943-1946 Box 8. Folder 10. Shaw, G. Bernard (subject), 1947 Box 8. Folder 11. Shaw, G. Bernard (subject), 1948-1949 Box 8. Folder 12. Shaw, G. Bernard (subject), 1950 Box 8. Folder 13. Shaw, G. Bernard (subject), 1951-1958 Box 8. Folder 14. Shaw, G. Bernard (The Shaw Society of America), 1950-1951 Box 8. Folder 15. Shaw, Sam, 1966, undated Box 8. Folder 16. Siegal, Stanley, 1963, undated

Box 8. Folder 17. Silver, Abba Hillel, 1946-1953

Box 9. Folder 1. SI-Sw, General.

Box 9. Folder 2. Smitter, Leila and Yvor, 1964-1969

Box 9. Folder 3. Soames, Christopher, 1956-1957

Box 9. Folder 4. Sosenko, Anna, 1952-1953

Box 9. Folder 5. Steingut, Stanley, 1972-1976

Box 9. Folder 6. Sterling, Louis, 1952-1958 Box 9. Folder 7. Stevenson, Adlai, 1945-1965, undated Box 9. Folder 8. Sulzberger, Mrs. Arthur Hays, 1954-1968 Box 9. Folder 9. T-V, General. Box 9. Folder 10. Taft, Robert, 1947-1953 Box 9. Folder 11. Taylor, Harold, 1951-1952 Box 9. Folder 12. Van Atta, Lee, 1968-1969 Box 9. Folder 13. Vanderbilt, Gloria, 1958-1978 Box 9. Folder 14. W, General. Box 9. Folder 15. Wainstead, Leslie, 1967, undated Box 9. Folder 16. Wang, Shih-Chieh, 1947 Box 9. Folder 17. Warner, Jack, 1959-1963 Box 9. Folder 18. Williams, Francis, 1946-1947 Box 9. Folder 19. Willkie, Wendell, 1941-1942 Box 9. Folder 20. Winchell, Walter, 1945-1946 Box 9. Folder 21. Wise, Robert, 1964 Box 9. Folder 22. Wolfson, Isaac, 1962-1964 Box 9. Folder 23. Wood, John H., 1946-1949 Box 9. Folder 24. X-Z, General. Box 9. Folder 25. Yeh, George K. C., 1946-1964 Box 9. Folder 26. Yih, Chen, 1945-1969, undated Box 9. Folder 27. Zarchin, Alexander, 1960-1968 Box 9. Folder 28. Zarchin, Alexander. Miscellaneous. Box 9. Folder 29. Zarchin, Alexander. Clippings. Box 9. Folder 30. Miscellaneous correspondence, 1933-1971, undated

Subseries 2. Organizational, 1924-1969, undated

Extent 0.6 linear feet (1.5 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note Of particular interest in this subseries are the files of the African Agricultural Industries, an organization concerned with increasing the production of food in Africa.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 10. Folder 1. General.
Box 10. Folder 2. African Agricultural Industries, 1963-1967
Box 10. Folder 3. African Agricultural Industries - Republic of Chad, 1962-1963 May
Box 10. Folder 4. African Agricultural Industries - Republic of Chad, 1963 August-December

Box 10. Folder 5. African Agricultural Industries - Republic of Chad, 1964

Box 10. Folder 7. African Agricultural Industries - Nigeria, 1964 January-June Box 10. Folder 8. African Agricultural Industries - Nigeria, 1964 July-December Box 10. Folder 9. African Agricultural Industries - Nigeria, 1965-1967 Box 10. Folder 10. African Agricultural Industries - Nigeria. Printed matter. Box 10. Folder 11. African Agricultural Industries - Somalia and Ethiopia, 1963-1964 Box 10. Folder 12. American Zionist Emergency Council, 1947-1949 Box 10. Folder 13. Association for Resettlement of Oppressed People, 1938-1939 Box 10. Folder 14. Association for Resettlement of Oppressed People reports. Box 10. Folder 15. British Actors Orphanage Fund, 1940 July-September Box 10. Folder 16. British Actors Orphanage Fund, 1940 October-December Box 11. Folder 1. Christian Science Monitor, 1945-1969 Box 11. Folder 2. Gulf American Corporation, 1967-1968 Box 11. Folder 3. Inter-American Bar Association, 1965-1968 Box 11. Folder 4. Liberal International, 1962-1969 Box 11. Folder 5. Lloyds of London, 1957-1958 Box 11. Folder 6. New York State Republican Committee, 1924-1930 Box 11. Folder 7. Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, 1951-1952 Box 11. Folder 8. United Nations - San Francisco Conference, 1945-1947 Box 11. Folder 9. Women's International Zionist Organization, 1952 Box 11. Folder 10. Zionist Organization of America, 1948-1969, undated

Series B. Subject Materials, 1938-1975

Extent 0.2 linear feet (0.5 Hollinger box)

Scope and Content Note Consists of materials dealing with subjects of interest to Holtzmann. Of special interest are the files relating to the Republic of China and Zionism.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 11. Folder 11. Cancer research, 1952-1968
Box 11. Folder 12. China, Republic of, 1945 May-June
Box 11. Folder 13. China, Republic of, 1945 August-1949
Box 11. Folder 14. China, Republic of, 1950-1973, undated
Box 11. Folder 15. China, Republic of. Miscellaneous.
Box 11. Folder 16. China, Republic of. Clippings.
Box 11. Folder 17. Lockheed, 1971
Box 11. Folder 18. Parochial schools, 1971
Box 11. Folder 19. Plasma Light Sources, 1970-1975
Box 11. Folder 20. Zionism, 1938-1969, undated

Series C. Legal Materials, 1920-1969

Extent 2 linear feet (5 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note Consists of materials relating to cases handled by Holtzmann and her law firm. Included in this series are many of the most famous and important cases Holtzmann handled for celebrities and nobility.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 12. Folder 1. Phyllis (Potter) Astaire v. E.M. Potter correspondence, 1933-1935 Box 12. Folder 2. Phyllis (Potter) Astaire v. E.M. Potter pleadings, 1932-1933 Box 12. Folder 3. Phyllis (Potter) Astaire v. E.M. Potter notes, clippings. Box 12. Folder 4. Jack Buchanan. Contracts, 1929-1930 Box 12. Folder 5. Jack Buchanan-Berliner patent, 1930-1931 Box 12. Folder 6. A.P. Waxman v. Jack Buchanan, 1933 Box 12. Folder 7. Jack Buchanan/Glencloy Corporation, 1930-1956 Box 12. Folder 8. Chiang Kai-Shek v. Roy Press, 1946 Box 12. Folder 9. Republic of China v. Pang-Tsu Mow and Ve-Shuen Hsiang. Box 12. Folder 10. Ina Claire v. John Gilbert, 1930-1935 Box 12. Folder 11. Copyright laws, 1937 Box 12. Folder 12. Angela Csordas - Refugee immigration, 1957 Box 12. Folder 13. Francis Hackett/McCall's Corporation- Queen Anne Boleyn, 1939 Box 13. Folder 1. Iraq Oil Concessions/National Petroleum Corp. Ltd., 1966 March-July Box 13. Folder 2. Iraq Oil Concessions/National Petroleum Corp. Ltd., 1966 August-December Box 13. Folder 3. Iraq Oil Concessions/National Petroleum Corp. Ltd., 1967 Box 13. Folder 4. Iraq Oil Concessions/National Petroleum Corp. Ltd., 1968-1968, undated Box 13. Folder 5. Dhya Al-Din Jafar v. Southern Natural Gas Corp., 1967-1968 Box 13. Folder 6. Hans Knoll Furniture Co.-U.S. Navy Contracts, 1942-1946 Box 13. Folder 7. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. v. Horace Gregory, 1944-1948 Box 13. Folder 8. Hui-Lan Koo (Madame Wellington) v. Dial Press, 1942-1945 Box 13. Folder 9. Nathan Leopold, Jr. v. Meyer Levin, et al, undated Box 13. Folder 10. Malawi Oil Concessions, 1966-1969, undated Box 13. Folder 11. Clara Lipman Mann v. Edgar Selwynn and Edmund Goulding, 1926-1952, undated Box 13. Folder 12. Clara Lipman Mann v. Edgar Selwynn and Edmund Goulding, 1926-1952, undated Box 14. Folder 1. Syrie Maugham v. W. Somerset Maugham pleadings, 1936-1942 Box 14. Folder 2. Syrie Maugham v. W. Somerset Maugham correspondence, 1941-1942 Box 14. Folder 3. MCA Artists v. David Niven, 1949 Box 14. Folder 4. State of New York v. Anthony Savino, 1960-1961 Box 14. Folder 5. Estate of Czar Nicholas II of Russia, 1920-1935, undated

Box 14. Folder 6. Estate of Czar Nicholas II of Russia, 1967

Box 14. Folder 7. Nadine Proctor v. Percy Proctor, 1920-1935

Box 14. Folder 8. Emanuel Revici v. Kemsley Newspapers Ltd., 1955

Box 14. Folder 9. Emanuel Revici v. McCall's Corp. and Walter Sanford Ross, undated

Box 14. Folder 10. Right of Privacy Act, 1956-1967

Box 14. Folder 11. Tibor Rosenbaum v. Life Magazine, 1967-1968

Box 14. Folder 12. Selznick Releasing Organization, Inc. v. MGM, 1952-1953

Box 14. Folder 13. Bishnu Shumshere, Prince of Nepal - American Visa, 1941 July-August

Box 14. Folder 14. Bishnu Shumshere, Prince of Nepal - American Visa, 1941 August

Box 14. Folder 15. Bishnu Shumshere, Prince of Nepal - American Visa, 1941 September-October

Box 14. Folder 16. Bishnu Shumshere, Prince of Nepal - American Visa, 1942, undated

Box 15. Folder 1. Karl Vollmoeller-Release from Alien Internment Camp depositions, 1942

Box 15. Folder 2. Karl Vollmoeller-Release from Alien Internment Camp correspondence, 1942-1943

Box 15. Folder 3. Karl Vollmoeller clippings.

Box 15. Folder 4. Grand Duchess of Xenia of Russia v. Farrar and Rinehart, 1933-1936

Box 15. Folder 5. Felix Youssoupoff v. CBS, Inc. correspondence, 1954-1963

Box 15. Folder 6. Felix Youssoupoff v. CBS, Inc. correspondence, 1964

Box 15. Folder 7. Felix Youssoupoff v. CBS, Inc. correspondence, 1965-1967, undated

Box 15. Folder 8. Felix Youssoupoff v. CBS, Inc. pleadings, 1963

Box 15. Folder 9. Felix Youssoupoff v. CBS, Inc. pleadings, 1964-1966

Box 15. Folder 10. Felix Youssoupoff v. CBS, Inc. pleadings, undated

Box 15. Folder 11. Felix Youssoupoff v. CBS, Inc. pleadings, undated

Box 15. Folder 12. Felix Youssoupoff v. CBS, Inc. clippings.

Box 16. Folder 1. Felix Youssoupoff - Film Rights to Autobiographies.

Box 16. Folder 2. Felix Youssoupoff - Autobiography - La Fin de Raspoutine.

Box 16. Folder 3. Felix Youssaupoff v. Hammer Film Productions Ltd., 1965

Box 16. Folder 4. Felix Youssoupoff v. Hammer Film Productions Ltd. Script - "The Mad Monk".

Box 16. Folder 5. Irina Youssoupoff v. MGM pleadings, 1933

Box 16. Folder 6. Irina Youssoupoff v. MGM pleadings, 1933

Box 16. Folder 7. Irina Youssoupoff v. MGM pleadings, correspondence, 1934-1936

Box 16. Folder 8. Irina Youssoupoff v. MGM script - "Nights of Rasputin".

Box 16. Folder 9. Irina Youssoupoff v. MGM references to "Nights of Rasputin".

Box 16. Folder 10. Irina Youssoupoff v. MGM Clippings.

Box 16. Folder 11. Legal miscellaneous, 1922-1947, undated

Series D. Personal, 1927-1980

Extent 1.2 linear feet (3 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content NoteConsists of assorted correspondence, photographs and miscellaneous materials relating to
Holtzmann's personal affairs and interests. Of note in the Personal Miscellaneous file is a
letter from Alfred Gottschalk to Holtzmann, dated January 10, 1980, informing her that she
has been recommended for and will receive the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters
from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.

Arrangement The s

The series is alphabetically arranged.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 17. Folder 1. Art, 1945-1970, undated

Box 17. Folder 2. Association of the Bar of the City of New York - Annual Art Exhibition, 1970

Box 17. Folder 3. Book Inscriptions.

Box 17. Folder 4. Admission to the Bar of the State of California, 1927

Box 17. Folder 5. Connecticut Estate, 1938-1942

Box 17. Folder 6. Court of St. James, 1934-1935

Box 17. Folder 7. Diary, 1967

Box 17. Folder 8. European trip, 1930

Box 17. Folder 9. European trip, 1965

Box 17. Folder 10. Hadassah speech, 1930

Box 17. Folder 11. Hadassah speech, 1965

Box 17. Folder 12. Holtzmann, Henry (father), 1941, undated

Box 17. Folder 13. Holtzmann, Jacob (brother), 1947-1948, undated

Box 17. Folder 14. Hedda Hopper article, 1965-1966

Box 17. Folder 15. Israel trip, 1951

Box 17. Folder 16. Language lessons, 1946

Box 17. Folder 17. Language lessons, 1952

Box 18. Folder 1. Manuscript. A New Song.

Box 18. Folder 2. Manuscript. Miracles are Daily with us. Pp. 1-25.

Box 18. Folder 3. Manuscript. Miracles are Daily with us. Pp. 251-500.

Box 18. Folder 4. Manuscript. Miracles are Daily with us. Pp. 501-800.

Box 18. Folder 5. Manuscript. Miracles are Daily with us. Pp. 801-950.

Box 19. Folder 1. Manuscript. Miracles are Daily with us. Pp. 1-250.

Box 19. Folder 2. Notes, 1967, undated

Box 19. Folder 3. Paperback Library, Inc, 1963

Box 19. Folder 4. Passports.

Box 19. Folder 5. Scrapbook, undated

Box 19. Folder 6. Sculpture lessons, 1951

Box 19. Folder 7. World trip, 1953

Box 19. Folder 8. Personal miscellaneous, 1924-1980, undated

Box 19. Folder 9. Personal miscellaneous, undated

Box 19. Folder 10. Drawings and paintings by Fanny Holtzmann, undated



MS-84: Fanny E. Holtzmann Papers

Subject Tracings

Note: The following list of subjects is a selective index to many of the topics and individuals in the FANNY E. HOLTZMANN PAPERS. It is selective in that it only attempts to draw attention to the more significant items in the collection. It does not attempt to list every subject or individual nor does it try to indicate all places that a listed subject or individual appears in the collection. When used in conjunction with the Box and Folder List, the Subject Tracings should help the researcher locate topics. References are to boxes and folders: e.g., 3/20 means Box 3, Folder 20.

Alexander-Sinclair, John 1/3, 11/1 Anti-Semitism 1/12, 3/8, 6/12 Arnon, Michael 1/6, 3/8, 5/26 Astaire, Fred 1/1, 12/1, 12/2, 12/3

Beale, Louis 1/10 Beausset, Valery S. de 1/15, 10/3, 10/4, 10/5, 10/7 Ben-Horin, Eliahu 1/10 Bernstein, Leonard 1/10 Borge, Victor 1/19 Britain 1/8, 1/9, 1/17, 3/3, 3/14, 4/5, 5/2, 6/12, 6/25, 9/19, 9/21, 10/15 Burns, Arthur F. 1/31, 1/11

Cancer Research 5/19, 7/3, 7/4, 7/6, 11/11 Channing Carol 2/7 China, Republic of 1/3, 1/10, 1/25, 1/31, 1/32, 2/23, 2/25, 3/9, 4/10, 4/11, 4/12, 4/14, 5/7, 5/12, 5/13, 5/14, 5/15, 9/21, 9/26, 11/8, 11/12, 12/8, 12/9 Communism 3/9, 3/14 Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany 5/25 Coward, Noel 10/15, 10/16, 5/20

Davidson, Irwin 2/20 Desmond, Charles 2/20

Eban, Abba 3/2, 3/8 Equatorial Corportation 10/2

Ferber, Edna 10/12 Firestone, Harvey 3/6 Fish, Hamilton 1/4, 1/31, 1/32, 3/2, 3/7, 3/8, 3/9, 3/10, 3/11, 11/2, 7/10, 7/12, 9/13 Fishbein, Robert E. 11/11 Fleischmann, Julius 3/12, 4/7



MS-84: Fanny E. Holtzmann Papers

Subject Tracings

Gammie, John 3/18 Goldblath, Maurice 3/18 Goulding, Edmund 1/12, 3/3, 3/23

Hammerstein, Oscar 4/1 Hardwicke, Cedric 10/16 Harris, Lionel 10/3, 10/4, 10/5 Hiss, Alger 1/30, 4/6 Hollister, John B. 3/12, 4/7 Hoo, Victor 10/11 Hussey, Harry 4/11, 4/12, 5/12, 5/13, 5/14

Iraq Oil Concessions 1/3, 1/10, 3/8, 13/1, 13/2, 13/3, 13/4

Jessup, Phillip C. 5/1 Jordan, Philip 5/1 Jung, Leo 5/1

Kirk, Claude 11/2 Koo, Hui-Lan 5/10, 5/11, 5/12, 13/8

LaGuardia Fiorello 5/18 Lawrence, Gertrude 1/5, 1/7, 10/15, 10/16, 1/26, 11/11, 1/15, 2/21, 5/27, 8/8 Lindbergh, Charles A. 1/12 Lindsay, John V. 10/6, 3/9, 5/22 Lodge, John D. 1/6, 3/8, 5/24, 5/25, 5/26, 5/27 Luce, Clare Booth 5/18 Lydourezos, Alexandre 5/25, 5/28

McCormack, John W. 3/8 Moore, Peter 10/4, 6/9 Morgan, Frederick 3/1, 5/12, 5/13, 5/14 Morgan, Louise 3/3, 69/15 Murray, Philip 4/11, 5/12, 6/17

National Petroleum Corporation Ltd. 5/25, 13/1, 13/2, 13/3, 13/4 Nazism 1/8, 7/14, 9/20 Nixon, Richard 1/32, 3/9 Nizer, Louis 6/18



MS-84: Fanny E. Holtzmann Papers

Subject Tracings

O'Donnell, Terrence 6/22 Ottinger, Albert 6/22

Paley, William S. 6/24 Pickford, Mary 6/24 Proxmire, William 10/9, 6/27

Revici, Emanuel 1/4, 1/30, 11/11, 2/22, 3/12, 3/22, 4/1, 5/6, 6/15, 7/3, 7/4, 7/5, 7/6, 8/6, 9/9 Rickett, F. William 3/8, 3/13, 5/25, 8/8, 8/9, 9/16, 13/1, 13/2, 13/3, 13/4 Rosen, Leonard 1/2, 7/12

Sargent, Noel 10/5, 10/7, 10/8, 11/2, 7/20 Siegal, Stanley 10/3, 8/16 Silver, Abba Hillel 8/17, 9/19 Silverstone, Murray 8/5 Smith, Mary Louise 9/1 Smitter, Yvor 10/3, 10/4, 10/5, 10/7, 10/9, 5/25 Stevenson, Adlia 10/7, 1/10, 9/8 Susskind, David 9/1

Taft, Robert 1/28, 9/11

United Nations 11/8, 5/6, 5/12, 5/13, 8/4

Wadsworth, James J. 9/15 Wainwright, Stuyvesant 9/12 Wallace, Henry A. 9/15, 5/12, 8/7 Williams, Francis 3/3, 3/15, 9/19 Willkie, Wendell 9/20, 3/15

Zionism 1/1, 1/4, 1/6, 1/24, 3/3, 3/8, 3/9, 3/10, 5/2, 5/13, 5/14, 6/12, 7/8, 7/14, 8/17, 9/11, 9/19, 11/9, 11/10, 11/20