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, newscuttings, 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.


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.


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Index Terms

Subjects Jewish women / Practice of law / Women lawyers


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 newscuttings.

Arrangement The 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. Achilless, Theodore C., 1945-1962, undated
Box 1. Folder 3. Alexander-Sinclair, John, 1951-1977
Box 1. Folder 5. Anspacher, Carolyn, 1952-1970
Box 1. Folder 7. Astley, Philip, 1952-1974
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Box 1. Folder 9. Duchess of Atholl, 1939-1957, undated
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Box 1. Folder 12. Barton, Bruce, 1939-1958, undated
Box 1. Folder 15. Beausset, Connie and Valery de, 1953-1968, undated
Box 1. Folder 16. Belk, Samuel, 1965
Box 1. Folder 23. Brashier, Hunter, 1971
Box 1. Folder 26. Bromfield, Louis, 1939
Box 1. Folder 27. Bromfield, Louis, 1940-1963, undated
Box 1. Folder 29. Brown, Oliver, 1949
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 7. Ch-Cu, General.
Box 2. Folder 8. Chang, P. H., 1946-1947
Box 2. Folder 12. Cobey, Herbert, 1950-1951
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 22. Dickson-Wright, Arthur, 1961-1968, undated
Box 2. Folder 23. Donald, W. H., 1945
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 5. Elath, Eliahu, 1953-1962
Box 3. Folder 10. Fish, Hamilton, 1974-1978, undated
Box 3. Folder 11. Fish, Hamilton Jr., 1970-1974
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 20. Getts, Clark H., 1936-1940
Box 3. Folder 22. Gould, Bruce, 1945-1971
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 9. Hoover, J. Edgar, 1942
Box 4. Folder 11. Hussey, Harry, 1943-1945
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 7. Kadoorie, Lawrence, 1953-1977
Box 5. Folder 8. Kahler, Hugh M., 1945-1946, undated
Box 5. Folder 10. Koo, Hui-Lan (Madame Wellington), 1946-1962, undated
Box 5. Folder 12. Koo, V. K. Wellington, 1943-1945
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 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 6. Folder 1. Ma-Mi, General.
Box 6. Folder 6. McNaughton, Glen, 1970
Box 6. Folder 12. Morgan, Frederick, 1946-1957
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 23. Ormerod, Berkley, 1946-1979
Box 6. Folder 25. Peake, Charles, 1941
Box 7. Folder 2. Ramsbotham, Peter, 1974-1976
Box 7. Folder 3. Revici, Emanuel, 1954-1972
Box 7. Folder 5. Revici, Emanuel (subject), 1952-1966
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 8. Folder 1. Sc-Se, General.
Box 8. Folder 2. Scully, Frank, 1945-1949
Box 8. Folder 5. Sh-Sk, General.
Box 8. Folder 7. Shaw, G. Bernard, 1943-1948
Box 8. Folder 10. Shaw, G. Bernard (subject), 1947
Box 8. Folder 12. Shaw, G. Bernard (subject), 1950
Box 8. Folder 15. Shaw, Sam, 1966, undated
Box 8. Folder 17. Silver, Abba Hillel, 1946-1953
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 4. African Agricultural Industries - Republic of Chad, 1963 August-December
Box 10. Folder 5. African Agricultural Industries - Republic of Chad, 1964
Box 10. Folder 13. Association for Resettlement of Oppressed People, 1938-1939
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 6. New York State Republican Committee, 1924-1930

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 12. China, Republic of, 1945 May-June
Box 11. Folder 17. Lockheed, 1971
Box 11. Folder 18. Parochial schools, 1971
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 5. Jack Buchanan-Berliner patent, 1930-1931
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 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 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 9. Emanuel Revici v. McCall's Corp. and Walter Sanford Ross, undated
Box 14. Folder 15. Bishnu Shumshere, Prince of Nepal - American Visa, 1941 September-October
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
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 8. Felix Youssoupoff v. CBS, Inc. pleadings, 1963
Box 15. Folder 10. Felix Youssoupoff v. CBS, Inc. pleadings, undated
Box 15. Folder 11. Felix Youssoupoff v. CBS, Inc. pleadings, undated
Box 16. Folder 1. Felix Youssoupoff - Film Rights to Autobiographies.
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 Note**
Consists 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 series is alphabetically arranged.

**Box and Folder Listing**

Box 17. Folder 1. Art, 1945-1970, undated
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 15. Israel trip, 1951
Box 17. Folder 16. Language lessons, 1946
Box 17. Folder 17. Language lessons, 1952
Box 19. Folder 5. Scrapbook, undated
Box 19. Folder 7. World trip, 1953
Box 19. Folder 9. Personal miscellaneous, undated
Box 19. Folder 10. Drawings and paintings by Fanny Holtzmann, undated
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.

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