A Finding Aid to the
Fanny Goldstein Papers

Manuscript Collection No. 205
Collection Summary

Title: Fanny Goldstein Papers
Dates: 1926-1961
Collection Number: MS-205
Repository: The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
Creator: Goldstein, Fanny, 1895-1961
Extent: 2 linear feet (5 Hollinger boxes)
Language of the Material: English, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, and Yiddish

Administrative Information

Biographical Sketch

Fanny Goldstein was born 15 May 1895 in Kaments-Pdolsk, Russia. In 1900, she emigrated with her family to the North End in Boston, Massachusetts, where she was to remain for the rest of her life.

After taking classes at Simmons College, Boston University and Harvard University, Goldstein became a librarian at the Boston Public Library North End branch in 1913. As an immigrant, Goldstein worked in branch libraries with large immigrant audiences by choice. She felt that understanding ethnicity of oneself and one’s neighbors was critical to acculturating to America. At her branch library, Goldstein held an annual Hanukkah-Christmas party. She also organized the Saturday Evening Girls Club in 1914. This club allowed members to learn about other’s ethnic backgrounds as well as job skills. In 1922, Goldstein became the branch librarian at the West End, where she was to remain until her retirement in 1957.

Goldstein was best known as the founder of Jewish Book Week which evolved into National Jewish Book Month. In 1925, she created an exhibit of Jewish books which gave her the idea to further encourage Jewish literature. This expanded not only to Jewish Book Week, but also was the start of Goldstein’s collection of Judaica within her branch. Goldstein also had close ties with and encouraged several young authors including, Reba Paef Mirsky and Charles Angoff, in literary careers.

Fanny Goldstein died December 26, 1961 after a long illness. Her Judaica collection became a separate section of the main branch of the Boston Public Library.

Scope and Content

The Fanny Goldstein Papers are the record of the professional activities of Fanny Goldstein, the first female Judaica librarian and the founder of National Jewish Book Week. Goldstein was also the first Jewish woman to direct a branch library in Massachusetts. The collection does not directly contain materials about the start of Jewish Book Week, but activities, speakers, and publicity relating to this topic can be found in the correspondence files. The correspondence also contains numerous references to outreach and collecting activities relating to her position as a branch librarian at the Boston Public Library. The collection spans the dates 1921-1961 but the bulk of the materials cover 1937-1957.

Fanny Goldstein was an author as well as a librarian of Judaica and the collection contains correspondence about articles she wrote for various publications. It also contains one manuscript of a bibliography entitled The Jew in Literature and Contemporary Life and material relating to Nazi book burnings in Germany.

Arrangement

The papers are arranged into two (2) series: A. Correspondence; B. Writings and Activities.

Terms of Access

The collection is open for use; no restrictions apply.

Preferred Citation

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

[Description], [Date], Box #, Folder #. MS-205. Fanny Goldstein Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Provenance

Received from Fanny Goldstein, Boston, Mass., August 1961. The correspondence between Goldstein and Joshua Bloch was donated by Rose Brenner, Brookline, Mass., October 1962.

Processing Information

Processed by Melinda McMartin, December 2001.
Series A. Correspondence, 1925-1961

Extent 1.8 linear feet (4.5 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note Consists of correspondence in relationship to Fanny Goldstein's work as a librarian at the Boston Public Library. Some of the correspondence relates to raising funds and finding speakers for her Judaica section. Correspondents of note in this series include: Joshua Bloch, Louis D. Brandeis and Felix Frankfurter.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 1. Folder 1. A, General.
Box 1. Folder 3. American Friends of Hebrew University, 1926-1960
Box 1. Folder 4. American Jewish Committee, 1940-1957
Box 1. Folder 5. American Jewish Historical Society, 1932, 1940-1945, 1953-1959
Box 1. Folder 6. Angoff, Charles, 1949-1951
Box 1. Folder 10. Antin, Mary, 1931, 1936-1939
Box 1. Folder 11. Australian Jewish Historical Society, 1941-1953, undated
Box 2. Folder 2. Blackwell, Alice Stone, 1934-1950, undated
Box 2. Folder 3. Bloch, Joshua [English, Yiddish], 1928-1936
Box 2. Folder 4. Bloch, Joshua, 1937-1942
Box 2. Folder 5. Bloch, Joshua, 1943-1961
Box 2. Folder 8. Brandeis, Louis, 1934-1941
Box 2. Folder 11. Capert, Jean, 1940-1941, 1946-1951
Box 2. Folder 13. Coleman, Edward D., 1930-1939
Box 2. Folder 15. E, General.
Box 3. Folder 1. F, General.
Box 3. Folder 2. Fein, Harry H., 1937-1955, undated
Box 3. Folder 3. Friedman, Lee M., 1932-1959
Box 3. Folder 5. Glatzer, Nahum M., 1949-1960
Box 3. Folder 6. Green, Sally S., 1940-1942, 1959
Box 3. Folder 7. Guppy, Henry, 1939-1945
Box 3. Folder 11. Jacobs, Maurice, 1936-1948
Box 3. Folder 18. Lowitz, Martin, 1936-1938, undated
Box 4. Folder 7. Ovid, Moshes [Good, Edward], 1927-1959, undated
Box 5. Folder 1. Spiegelberg, Flora, 1935-1940
Box 5. Folder 2. T-V, General.
Series B. Writings and Activities, 1933-1956, undated

Extent 0.2 linear feet (0.5 Hollinger box)

Scope and Content Note Consists of Goldstein's writing and research. This series contains newsclippings about Goldstein's activities, and a bibliography titled The Jew in Literature and Contemporary Life. Goldstein was extremely interested in the Nazi book burnings and this series contains her correspondence and reports concerning the subject. Much of the correspondence is in other languages including German, Hebrew, Italian and Yiddish.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 5. Folder 9. Clippings.


Box 5. Folder 11. Nazi book burnings. Correspondence and reports, 1933-1939

Box 5. Folder 12. Nazi book burnings. Correspondence and reports, 1941-1946