


12-31-1995

Judaica Americana: An Annotated Bibliography of Publications from 1960 to 1990, by Nathan M. Kaganoff. Preface by Jonathan D. Sarna. Brooklyn: Carlson Publishing, Inc., 1995. 2 vols. ISBN 0-926019-75-9. \$150

Robert Singerman  
*University of Florida, Gainesville, FL*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://ajlpublishing.org/jl>

 Part of the [Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons](#), [Information Literacy Commons](#), [Jewish Studies Commons](#), [Other American Studies Commons](#), and the [Reading and Language Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Singerman, Robert. 1995. "Judaica Americana: An Annotated Bibliography of Publications from 1960 to 1990, by Nathan M. Kaganoff. Preface by Jonathan D. Sarna. Brooklyn: Carlson Publishing, Inc., 1995. 2 vols. ISBN 0-926019-75-9. \$150." *Judaica Librarianship* 9: 32-34. doi:10.14263/2330-2976.1180.

***Judaica Americana: An Annotated Bibliography of Publications from 1960 to 1990*, by Nathan M. Kaganoff. Preface by Jonathan D. Sarna. Brooklyn: Carlson Publishing, Inc., 1995. 2 vols. ISBN 0-926019-75-9. \$150 (\$75 for members of the American Jewish Historical Society).**

Reviewed by:  
**Robert Singerman**  
University of Florida,  
Gainesville

Carlson Publishing, a new firm specializing in reference tools for the library market, is to be congratulated for its series supporting American Jewish history, an active field of scholarly research, begging for serviceable bibliographies and guides to the literature. [See review of another Carlson publication, *Concise Dictionary of American Jewish Biography*, in this issue.—Ed.]

Reviewing Nathan Kaganoff's *Judaica Americana* is a special challenge, because the compiler died in 1992 and thus was not involved in the editing of the set that bears his name. [A similar situation occurred with Dr. Kaganoff's last contribution to this journal; see vol. 6 (1992), pp. 49–52—Ed.] Readers of the journal *American Jewish History* (entitled *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* from 1961 to 1981) relied on Dr. Kaganoff's bibliographic section, called "Judaica Americana," for its carefully annotated listing of monographs and selected periodicals received at the American Jewish Historical Society (AJHS), where "Dr. K" (as he was affectionately known) served for three decades as the Society's librarian. By the time of his death, a total of 58 installments of "Judaica Americana" had appeared since its debut in September 1962 (vol. 52 no. 1). The compilation under review, with 7,427 entries, integrates all of the installments, retaining the topical categories established by Kaganoff.

### Scope and Coverage

No user of *Judaica Americana* should assume that it is a complete record of "publications from 1960 to 1990" as communicated by its subtitle. The unnamed project editors should have provided an introduction explaining the known parameters of Dr. Kaganoff's work and, insofar as was possible in light of the compiler's passing, delineating the format limitations and exclusions as they relate to the work's scope.

Dr. Kaganoff's compilation does not include creative writing, such as novels with Jewish protagonists set in the American

as, nor does it list American rabbinical literature, a personal interest of Kaganoff that he reserved for publication in the *Jewish Book Annual* (JBA), in the section entitled "American Hebrew Books" (in volumes 36–49; 1978/79–1991/92). (Rabbi Theodore Wiener had earlier responsibility for coverage of this genre.) It can be assumed that Kaganoff maintained an informal division of labor between "Judaica Americana" and the *Jewish Book Annual*; his own inventory of American rabbinica appeared only in the latter, and American novels and juvenilia were deferred to other JBA bibliographers.

Dr. Kaganoff's work is not a traditional enumerative bibliography, in that there was no attempt by the compiler to identify and classify all literature related to the American Jewish experience, regardless of language, format, or where the material is held and made available to researchers. No institution can afford to purchase (or realistically expect to receive as gifts) all materials relevant to its research mission. Authors, especially those who made use of the AJHS's resources, may have generously donated copies of their monographs; review copies would normally have trickled into the AJHS.

*Judaica Americana* is limited to the holdings of a single institution: namely, the American Jewish Historical Society, which is located on the campus of Brandeis University in Waltham, Mass. The Society's modest financial resources do not permit exhaustive coverage of the field, especially if the scope of Jewish Americana is defined as extending to Latin American and Canadian publications.

Given the proliferation of "gray literature" produced by local Jewish historical societies, research centers on university campuses, synagogues, Jewish defense and communal agencies, federations, pro-Israel organizations, etc., it is exceedingly difficult for librarians to monitor and collect ephemeral publications such as research reports, speeches and lecture series, demographic studies, and newsletters.

Kaganoff's bibliography captures some of this literature (privately published genealogies are especially well covered), but overall, the coverage of "gray literature" is less than comprehensive.

Nathan Kaganoff's compilation does not record unpublished theses and dissertations; microform sets and audiovisual materials (such as videocassettes) are similarly excluded. Kaganoff also does not record the first appearance of annual reports or the premier issues of Jewish newspapers and magazines. One looks in vain for any coverage of American antisemitica, sermonica, or the ubiquitous sisterhood cookbooks.

As previously stated, most booklets and small reports are not recorded by *Judaica Americana*. There is no single, comprehensive tool for librarians to scan for identifying this elusive literature, a great deal of which is available for less than ten dollars or for free. All librarians can relate stories of how it is easier to learn from an Israeli bookdealer's list about a new book released in Tel Aviv than it is to learn about a golden anniversary history of a synagogue located just two hundred miles away from their library. The situation was not any better in 1962 when Nathan Kaganoff initiated his bibliographic work; there were fewer tools to consult, and library automation was not yet common.

Librarians have traditionally turned to "Judaica Americana" as a valuable current-awareness tool for building collections, knowing full well that other sources (dealers' offers, publishers' catalogues, the Jewish National and University Library's bibliographical quarterly *Kiryat sefer*, the *Jewish Book Annual*, acquisition lists of other Jewish libraries, subject searching on the Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN), etc.) must be diligently tapped for the identification of new monographs and pamphlets.

Similarly, the journal literature is now so vast that articles related to American Jewish history and culture—however one

chooses to define this universe—may appear in local or regional history magazines or in scholarly quarterlies that are either not published under Jewish auspices or only sporadically feature an essay on a Jewish theme. These scattered contributions may even appear in Latin American, European, or Israeli journals—the last-mentioned in Hebrew.

Surely, Dr. Kaganoff received offprints of some journal articles; but no librarian working alone can realistically be expected to monitor the vast serial literature of the social sciences and humanities for citations of Jewish interest.

It must be remembered that a considerable amount of ephemeral material related to American Jewish experience is not captured by *Judaica Americana* if the proceedings, monographs, or brochures did not find their way to the Library of the American Jewish Historical Society; e.g., the important multi-volume proceedings of the World Congress of Jewish Studies, convened every four years in Jerusalem and treating all facets of Jewish life.

It is to Dr. Kaganoff's lasting credit that he amassed so much material with relatively limited resources at his disposal and within the working environment of a library that never joined OCLC or the Research Libraries Group,\* the parent body of RLIN, and that presumably did not have access to many indexing services, either in electronic form or in the traditional printed format.

### Categories and Arrangement

Before turning to the set's index and the problems it poses to the unsuspecting reader, a few words are in order about Dr. Kaganoff's seventeen subject categories, five of which are under the rubric General Works, and the balance under Special Studies. These are broad categories ("Cultural Life," "Historiography," "Local History," "Relations with Non-Jews," etc.) that were probably adequate at the time they were developed for categorizing relatively small numbers of publications in each semiannual installment of *Judaica Americana*. The categories do not necessarily correspond, however, to the way researchers conceptualize or search for the material. For example, with so much interest in gender and

issues related to the Jewish woman, this reviewer expected to find a section on women and feminism, but there is none.

The category "Local History," extending for nearly a hundred pages and containing slightly fewer than a thousand entries, is sorted alphabetically by author. Wouldn't it have been better for the items in this section, which is so conducive to a geographical approach, to have been sorted under headers for state and city?

"Biography," an even bigger section (over 3,000 entries!), also lends itself to arrangement of the entries under subheads, either A-Z by name of the biographee or—one could argue with some persuasiveness—by profession. "Literature," an absent category, could justifiably have been extracted from "Biography" so as to isolate criticism and biographies of authors such as Saul Bellow, Norman Mailer, and Arthur Miller.

No discrete category heading exists for "Religion." When this reviewer sought Theodore Lenn's *Rabbi and Synagogue in Reform Judaism*, the entry was curiously discovered under the rubric "Cultural Life," where may also be found materials on Chabad, Orthodoxy, Reconstructionism, Conservative Judaism, etc.—strangely comingled with the literature one expects to find in this category: on the Jewish press, Yiddish theater, Hebrew belles-lettres, music, and art. "Synagogue History" is placed in volume two, far removed from "Local History" in volume one. With a little editorial creativity, a way could have been found to merge these sections while distinguishing between the two categories under geographic headings.

Bibliographers tend to be either "lumpers" or "splitters"—a splitter creates numerous categories when the amount of material justifies. In the work under review, justifiable rubrics include "Agricultural Colonies," "Israelis in the United States," and "Sephardim." Based on his modest seventeen categories, the late Nathan Kaganoff may be called a "lumper"; he did not create the plethora of discrete categories which this reviewer, a "splitter," would have.

### The Index

The indexing of Kaganoff's *Judaica Americana* is not without defects, that is to say, it is embarrassingly substandard and dishonors an important project. The first problem with the index relates to the numbering of entries in the body of the work. A useful feature of *Judaica Americana* is the "Peri-

odicals" section, wherein the contents of selected research-oriented journals and magazines are inventoried in whole or in part, depending on the extent to which they treat American Jewish history. Unfortunately, a single entry number is assigned to each journal title; this makes indexing exceedingly cumbersome, in that the author index lacks sufficient specificity. For example, after locating "Franklin, Harvey B." in the author index, a reader has to scan fifteen pages of detailed contents for all twenty-three volumes of *Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly* (entry 1676) before landing on Franklin's article on Long Beach, California, in vol. 23, no. 2. A better technique would have been to assign a discrete entry number to individual volumes of periodicals or, barring that, including the volume number as part of the entry number, i.e., 1676: 23 for Franklin's contribution.

Other indexing problems abound; the most deplorable is the lack of consistency with respect to subject indexing of analyzed articles in the "Periodicals" category (entries 1631–1680). An example, just one of many, is the article by William Lee Provol, "Growing Up in Syracuse," in vol. 16, no. 1, of *American Jewish Archives* (entry 1631), which is not reflected in the subject index under "Syracuse." Other examples, including the inconsistent assignment of subject headings for individuals listed in the "Periodicals" section abound and detract greatly from *Judaica Americana*'s integrity.

There are irritating inconsistencies in the form of split files in the author index, in other words, unreconciled variant forms of the same name. This problem is illustrated by separate headings for Cyril Leonoff, Cyril E. Leonoff, and Cyril Edel Leonoff. Other examples, though not numerous, are both conspicuous and unwarranted. The Yiddish poet Jacob Glatstein appears in the subject index as Jacob Gladstone, Yankev Glatsteyn, and Jacob Glatstein; the last has the most entry numbers. Joshua A. Norton, the San Francisco eccentric, is found in the subject index under his real name and again under "Emperor Norton I."

Although subject cross-references exist, a little creativity would have generated additional ones that are obviously necessary and justified: "Aged, see Elderly"; "Mexico, see also Baja California." There is no linkage whatsoever between "Concentration camps" and "Holocaust" or between "Civil War," "Confederacy," and "United States,

\*The American Jewish Historical Society joined the Research Libraries Group in 1995.

Civil War." What is a confused reader to make of separate headings in the index for "Crypto-Jews," "Marranos," and "New Christians"? Are "Judeo-Spanish" and "Ladino" really distinct, and why is there no cross-reference to either term from "Judezmo," today's preferred term in most scholarly usage? A cross-reference linking "Blacks" and "Judaism, black" was desirable (the terms "Negroes" and "Afro-Americans" do not appear even as cross-references to "Blacks" in the subject index) as was a connector between "Aliyah" and "Israel, American settlers in."

Subject headings for Jewish places of worship appear variously under "Congregations, individual," "Synagogues, individual," or "Temples, individual," with no caution to the reader to check under the other two possibilities. Better editorial work would have reconciled the headings "Great Depression" and "Depression, the Great."

There are, however, useful features of the subject index that are encouraging and should be emulated. Subject entries for states feature *see also* references to individual cities within that state. In the case of autobiographies, the author is entered both in the author index and the subject index.

A strong case could be presented that an index of titles of monographs and the analyzed serials comprising entries 1631–1680 would have been highly desirable. Without this index, a reader trying to find the contents analysis of *Herzl Year Book* (entry 7384), *Journal of Jewish Music and Liturgy* (entry 5189), or *Modern Jewish Studies* (entry 5289) is at a total loss and would simply not know that these resources are included and their contents listed.

For reasons never explained, Dr. Kaganoff did not see fit to index the articles in *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* and its successor, *American Jewish History*, a bizarre omission considering the preeminent reputation of the quarterly in the research community and because his own "Judaica Americana" series appears there. The cumulated *Judaica Americana* cannot be approached as bibliographically authoritative for the 1960–1990 period because of this omission and because popular articles related to American Jewish life from magazines such as the *National Jewish Monthly* (now the *B'nai B'rith International Jewish Monthly*) or *Moment* magazine are not indexed.

#### Conclusions and Recommendations

*Judaica Americana* will become the enduring, authoritative source for Jewish Ameri-

cana in the period covered, though in no way should it be approached as a master index to periodicals (it does not purport to be one, given that it ignores practically all articles of a popular nature). The work is potentially an important tool for identifying research material published in the years 1960 to 1990, but its omissions and flawed indexing detract from a reader's ability to use this set to its full potential. It will remain, however, an invaluable first place to consult for the period covered.

With so much relevant material being published, planning efforts are clearly in order to continue Kaganoff's work, while at the same time expanding the indexing parameters of *Judaica Americana* to maximize its comprehensiveness. To do this properly, no small amount of collaboration is required for a coordinated team of compilers to draw effectively upon the strengths of several research collections from coast to coast. Should installments of the revived

"Judaica Americana" bibliography continue to appear in *American Jewish History*? (Jonathan Sarna resumed it in vol. 82 (1994), pp. 295–328.) Is it also desirable that an electronic format be developed (CD-ROM? A World Wide Web site? An index file mounted on RILIN comparable to the *Hispanic American Periodicals Index* or the Tozzer Library's *Anthropological Literature* index?) and maintained on a current and cumulative basis, enhanced by keyword searching? Discussions by concerned professionals are already underway to address these crucial issues in the post-Kaganoff era.

*Robert Singerman is the bibliographer for anthropology, Jewish studies, and linguistics at the George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida, Gainesville. His two-volume set, Judaica Americana: A Bibliography of Publications to 1900, was published by Greenwood Press in 1990.*

## BEYOND THESE SHORES

1934 — 1940

POEMS AND DIARY OF A JEWISH GIRL  
WHO ESCAPED FROM NAZI GERMANY



**RUTH ROSENFELD**

TRANSLATED by THOMAS DORSETT

*This small gem of a book is a haunting personal testimony.*—Booklist. \$9.95; information/orders, write: Icarus Books, 1015 Kenilworth Dr., Baltimore, MD 21204