

# The Jewish Book Council Library Citation: History and Report of a Follow-up Study

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## Introduction

The Jewish Book Council and the Association of Jewish Libraries (AJL) have for many years cooperated in projects which help to establish, guide, and upgrade Judaica libraries in schools, synagogues, and Jewish community centers. In 1962, the Council published *A Manual for Jewish Community Center, School and Congregation Libraries*, by Sophia N. Cedarbaum, a children's librarian and author of many children's books. She was assisted by several members of AJL, including Mae Weine, then librarian of Congregation Beth Israel in Camden, New Jersey. The Cedarbaum *Manual* was supplanted by *How To Organize a Jewish Library: A Source Book and Guide for Synagogue, School, and Center Libraries* by Margot S. Berman—past-president of AJL's Synagogue, School, and Center Division (SSC)—(JWB Jewish Book Council, 1982). This pamphlet appears both on the Jewish Book Council's publication list and on AJL's list, as part of its "Beginner's Kit."

The Council and AJL cooperated again with the publication of the first edition of *Standards for a Jewish Library*, prepared by the Association of Jewish Libraries, SSC Division (JWB Jewish Book Council, 1968), and with the second edition: *Standards for Jewish Libraries in Synagogues, Schools and Centers*, Revised Edition (JWB Jewish Book Council, 1970).

One area in which the Council and AJL have not yet cooperated is in the granting of citations of merit to Jewish Community Centers, Synagogues, Jewish Schools, and similar groups which have libraries that meet the minimum standards set down by The Council more than 36 years ago. The criteria were formulated by the Council in 1948 on the basis of a survey it had made of libraries of centers, synagogues, and schools. Criteria and minimum requirements as set forth in the application are: "the library must be organized for at least one year; at least one room must be set aside for its exclusive use; there must be a librarian either full or part time; a fixed annual budget; a minimum of 1000 books of Jewish interest regardless of language, an accession of a minimum of 100 books of Jewish interest

during the previous year; a catalogue accessible to all readers; the library must be open at least ten hours a week; the library must have a shelf of Jewish and general reference works. In addition to the above requirements, the library must participate actively in Jewish Book Month activities and render various services for the enrichment of Jewish culture." The application form for the library citation is reproduced in Appendix A.

By 1984, the number of libraries that had received citations had reached 243. Much happens over a period of 36 years. Congregations and neighborhoods change. Judaica librarianship has changed. We wondered what had happened to those libraries. Were they still in existence? Had they progressed, remained the same, or had they, perhaps, deteriorated? The Council wished to know their current status not only to correct its mailing list, but also for the purpose of working with the Association of Jewish Libraries to establish several levels of library citations, and to revise and update the Council's publication, *Standards for Jewish Libraries in Synagogues, Schools, and Centers*, last revised in 1970.

## The Follow-up Study

In the initial stages of the review process, a questionnaire was constructed (Appendix B) which expanded upon the minimum requirements needed for a library to receive a citation. A methodology for recording raw data was agreed upon, and a partial report of the results was made in March 1984. A follow-up query was mailed to non-responding libraries in June 1984. Those indicating that they had never received the questionnaire were sent duplicates. Sixteen more responses were thus acquired, and the additional data tabulated. Ten questionnaires were returned blank with notes saying that there was no longer a library staff to reply, nor was there a working library. Those libraries, and libraries returning questionnaires with insufficient data were subtracted from the number of libraries considered to have fully responded. The total number of libraries tabulated was 134, or 56% of the

original mailing list of libraries that had received citations.

This does not necessarily mean that the respondents are the only viable libraries. A third query which did not include the long questionnaire, but which merely asked librarians to indicate whether or not they wished to remain on the mailing list and to make any necessary corrections in their address yielded additional libraries of uncertain status. Furthermore, some libraries, known to be established, answered neither questionnaire, follow-up, nor query. A final caution in evaluating the data—not every responding library answered every question.

The summary of the survey's findings, as it was submitted to the Jewish Book Council, follows. A copy of the full report is available from the author.

## Major Findings and Interpretations

### Collection Development

1. The *rate* at which books are acquired is an important indicator of a library's worth. A library which has been in existence for seven years and has a collection of 7,000 books is more vital than a 42-year-old library with 10,000 books.

2. The composition of a library's collection—i.e., the proportion of fiction, non-fiction, and reference material—is indicative of its ability to serve. The more effective the library, the smaller its fiction collection. The usual distribution was 25% fiction, 65% non-fiction, and 10% reference. Libraries whose fiction collection exceeded one-quarter of the total made a poor showing on provision of reference service, number of hours staffed, and people served.

3. Children's collections could be categorized on the average as follows:

fiction and picture books (incl. folktales)	— 30%
Bible & Bible tales	— 10%
religion, ethics, prayer	— 05%
folktale and legend	
anthologies	— 05%
holiday non-fiction & stories	— 10%
social issues, life-cycle	— 05%



Figure 1

**APPLICATION FOR LIBRARY CITATION  
to  
JWB JEWISH BOOK COUNCIL**  
15 East 26th Street  
New York, New York 10010

The undersigned herewith submit that it meets the minimum requirement of a Judaica library as set forth by the JWB Jewish Book Council.

Name of Library \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Librarian \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Institution \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

1. The library was organized \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Library must be organized at least 1 year)*

2. \_\_\_\_\_ rooms are set aside for the Library.  
*(There must be at least 1 room set aside for the Library)*

3. The librarian is full-time \_\_\_\_\_ part-time \_\_\_\_\_. Specify number of hours \_\_\_\_\_  
*(The library must have a librarian either full-time or part-time for a minimum of ten hours a week)*

4. The income of the Library is \_\_\_\_\_ The expenditures are \_\_\_\_\_  
*(The Library must have a fixed budget)*

5. The Library has \_\_\_\_\_ books of Jewish interest.  
*(The Library must have a minimum of 1,000 books of Jewish interest)*

6. During the last year, \_\_\_\_\_ books of Jewish interest were accessed. Of these \_\_\_\_\_ books  
were acquired by purchase and \_\_\_\_\_ books were acquired by gift.  
*(The Library must have an accession of a minimum of 100 books of Jewish interest during the previous year)*

7. A catalog is \_\_\_\_\_ accessible to readers.  
*(The Library must maintain an accessible catalog)*

8. The Library is open \_\_\_\_\_  
*(The Library must be open ten hours a week on set days and hours)*

9. The Library does/does not have \_\_\_\_\_ a Jewish and general reference section.

10. The Library participates actively in Jewish Book Month activities and renders various services for the  
enrichment of Jewish groups as

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*(Continued on other side)*

Figure 1 (continued)

11. The Library has created a Jewish atmosphere through the use of (art, exhibits, holiday displays, children's arts and crafts, etc.)

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It is understood that the above application is subject to review by the Library Committee of the JWB Jewish Book Council which will decide whether or not the Library meets all of the requirements. The Committee, in its discretion, may request the fulfillment of other criteria before granting the certificate.

(President of institution) \_\_\_\_\_  
(signed)

(Rabbi or Executive) \_\_\_\_\_  
(signed)

(Librarian) \_\_\_\_\_  
(signed)

(Date) \_\_\_\_\_

Attach printed material issued by the Library including library rules, publicity, booklists, library forms, bookplates and related items and if possible, a photograph of the library.

language	— 02%
flora, fauna	— 02%
cooking, health, medicine	— 03%
songs, music, dance, art, crafts	— 03%
literature/anthologies, poetry, plays	— 05%
geography, history and biography	— 15%
reference	— 05%
	100%

4. Adult collections could be categorized on the average as follows:

fiction	— 25%
Bible and Talmud, rabbinic writings	— 10%
Jewish ethics, ritual practice, teachings, thought, prayer	— 10%
Jewish lifestyle, social & medical issues	— 10%
the arts	— 05%
immigration, geography, history, Holocaust and Israel	— 25%

biography	— 05%
reference	— 10%
	100%

5. Books are usually selected by the librarian, after soliciting suggestions from and consulting with the library committee, the rabbi, teachers, and patrons.

**Library Staff and Hours**

1. There is a direct correlation between the number of staff hours and the quality of a library. The more hours the librarian works, the better a library.
2. More people use a library when it has fixed hours of opening and there is a librarian in attendance. Libraries that are open "by appointment" or open all day on the honor system are seldom used.
3. The more hours a library is open, the more people use it. Although this seems self-evident, some respondents who staff a library fewer than ten hours weekly seemed

puzzled as to why so few people use the library.

4. Children are the heaviest users of synagogue libraries on weekdays. Adults use the library more frequently on Sunday mornings, and evenings after business hours.

**Library Staff**

1. The number of hours the library is supervised by a librarian is more important than the librarian's credentials. In other words, if a library on a limited budget can afford to hire a professional librarian for only a few hours, or a para-professional for many more hours, they should opt in favor of more hours of library coverage.
2. Forty-nine libraries reported having professional librarians, five of whom were volunteers. When the librarian comes in for two-four hours a week solely for organizing the library (classifying, cataloging, etc.) and not also for administering the library (training volunteers, planning programs and

services), little benefit is reflected in library service or use of the library.

3. Where a library employs clerical help in addition to the librarian, the questionnaire responses reflected a more positive attitude and reported reference and other readers' services, displays, programs, and library lessons.

4. Depending solely on volunteer staff leads to a decline in library service. Even when the volunteers are dedicated and hard-working, they usually do not participate in professional associations and conferences, or otherwise keep abreast of professional library developments.

5. Volunteers are used most effectively when they are coordinated and supervised by a salaried librarian.

6. The best libraries employ professional librarians for more than twenty hours per week plus clerical help.

**Funding**

1. The pattern of budget categories is irregular. Some budgets provide for salaries and supplies; others include collection materials and salaries, while the supplies are funded in the institution's budget. Sometimes the school budget shares the librarian's salary, since the librarian works closely with the school.

2. Libraries which have their own budget are more active in providing service than those that do not. This is not a hard and fast rule, however.

3. Some libraries which are budgeted for salary and supplies, but that must depend on donations for acquisitions do very well—as long as the library is open and supervised an adequate number of hours and maintains good reader services, programs, and public relations.

**Programs and Services**

1. The more lectures, story-telling hours, and other programs and services a library offers, the more it is used.

2. Libraries that work to make themselves visible through the use of articles in bulletins, publishing bibliographies, and other means serve more people than those that do not.

3. The more positive the librarian's attitude (as interpreted from the narrative), the more programs reported.

4. Funding for the library increases in direct proportion to the library's services and programs.

**Figure 2**  
**Library Accreditation Review Questionnaire**  
**JWB Jewish Book Council**  
**15 East 26th St. New York, N.Y. 10010**

Name of Library \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of Institution \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

(Kindly indicate your answers by checking the appropriate space or by filling in the space when necessary. Thank you.)

*General:*

1. How many years has the library been in existence? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Has service ever been interrupted? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If, "Yes," would you care to explain the circumstances? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many room(s) does the library occupy? \_\_\_\_\_ Please give approximate measurement(s) in square feet. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Is the library's catalog housed in a standard library card catalog? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 If, "No," please describe \_\_\_\_\_
4. How many drawers in the card catalog does the library's collection occupy? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Is the card catalog divided by author, title, subject, shelflist? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 If, "No," please describe its organization \_\_\_\_\_
5. Do you have a library budget? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If, "Yes," which range most closely resembles your budget: \$200-\$500 \_\_\_\_\_, \$500-\$1000 \_\_\_\_\_, \$1000-\$2000 \_\_\_\_\_, \$2000-\$5000 \_\_\_\_\_, \$5000-\$10,000 \_\_\_\_\_, Other\$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Is this year's library budget larger than last year's? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
6. Please check those items included in your budget.  
 New Books \_\_\_\_\_ Periodicals \_\_\_\_\_ Audio-Visual Materials \_\_\_\_\_ Programs \_\_\_\_\_  
 Publicity \_\_\_\_\_ Supplies \_\_\_\_\_ Salaries \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_
7. Does your library receive funds from sources other than its annual budget?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If, "Yes," please describe \_\_\_\_\_  
 What % of your annual acquisitions are from gifts or donations? \_\_\_\_\_%
8. Is the library a member of a Jewish Library Association? If, "Yes," please name which one(s) \_\_\_\_\_

*Staff:*

9. How many hours a week does the librarian(s) work? \_\_\_\_\_  
 When is the library open? Please fill in the chart below with the actual open hours each day (see example.)

	S	M	T	W	Th	F	Sat		
A.M.								Example W	10-11
P.M.									4-6, 8-10

10. Is the librarian(s) paid \_\_\_\_\_, unpaid \_\_\_\_\_; professional librarian \_\_\_\_\_, paraprofessional \_\_\_\_\_; holder of a Master's Degree in Librarianship \_\_\_\_\_, Bachelor's Degree in Librarianship \_\_\_\_\_, Certificate of Librarianship \_\_\_\_\_? If holder of a Certificate of Librarianship, is it Judaica Librarianship \_\_\_\_\_? Which institution granted the Certificate? \_\_\_\_\_

(Continued on next page)

Figure 2 (Continued)

11. Describe the librarian's Judaica training, knowledge or experience.  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. In addition to the librarian the staff includes people in the following positions:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Collection:

13. What is the library's total number of books? \_\_\_\_\_ of audio-visual materials? \_\_\_\_\_ of periodical titles? \_\_\_\_\_
14. How many of the above were acquired last year? books \_\_\_\_\_ AV \_\_\_\_\_ periodical titles \_\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_
15. Give the approximate % of the following to your total collection, if they are represented in your library: adult fiction \_\_\_\_\_, non-fiction \_\_\_\_\_, adult reference \_\_\_\_\_; juvenile fiction \_\_\_\_\_, non-fiction \_\_\_\_\_, juvenile reference \_\_\_\_\_; audio-visual materials \_\_\_\_\_, periodicals \_\_\_\_\_
16. The library has a subject emphasis. Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If, "Yes," the subject is: \_\_\_\_\_
17. Selection of library materials is made by the following: librarian \_\_\_\_\_, Library Board \_\_\_\_\_, others \_\_\_\_\_
18. Does the library have a written "Book Selection Policy?" Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
19. Does the library receive the *Jewish Book World* on a regular basis? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Please note which of the book-selection tools you use: *Judaica Book News* \_\_\_\_\_, *Publisher's Weekly* \_\_\_\_\_, *Library Journal* \_\_\_\_\_, publisher's catalogs \_\_\_\_\_, others: \_\_\_\_\_

Programs and Services:

20. Are reference services requested from the librarian? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If, "Yes," are they readily available? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Comments, if desired: \_\_\_\_\_
21. Those requesting reference help are: adults in independent study \_\_\_\_\_, in adult-education classes \_\_\_\_\_; children \_\_\_\_\_ (other than students), students \_\_\_\_\_; staff who work in the institution where the library is housed \_\_\_\_\_; people in the community \_\_\_\_\_.
- Frequently asked reference questions are: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
22. Does the library service foreign-speaking patrons by including books written in their native language in the library collection? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If, "Yes," which languages are represented? Yiddish \_\_\_\_\_ Hebrew \_\_\_\_\_ Russian \_\_\_\_\_ Farsi \_\_\_\_\_ Spanish \_\_\_\_\_ French \_\_\_\_\_ German \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_
23. Does the library make use of automation (e.g. micro-computer)? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If, "Yes," please describe the phase of library activity in which it is used (e.g. acquisitions, circulation. . .)? \_\_\_\_\_
24. Does the library participate in Jewish Book Month? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If, "Yes," please describe the activities, exhibits, or any other marking of the occasion: \_\_\_\_\_ Does the library usually hold a bookfair at this time? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_
25. Who is allowed to use the services of the library? members only \_\_\_\_\_ the community \_\_\_\_\_ other than members, but by special permission \_\_\_\_\_
26. How many people does the library serve each month? \_\_\_\_\_

Recommendations

1. Libraries should increase their hours to accommodate the needs of adult users who are busy during working hours.
2. Depending on the rabbi or a member of the institution's staff to unlock the library door and circulate books solely on request should be discouraged.
3. When an institution's budget provides only minimal funds for the library, it is better for the larger part of the funds to be spent for a librarian's salary than for books.
4. If it is necessary to choose between a professional (MLS) librarian who is hired for a few hours a week and a para-professional who can be hired for more hours (on a lower pay scale), it is better to go for the longer hours with the para-professional.
5. There is confusion as to what constitutes a professional librarian, a para-professional, a technician, etc. Establishing standards and job descriptions would be helpful [see the article by Barbara Leff preceding this one].
6. The Jewish Book Council should work with the Association of Jewish Libraries and Boards of Jewish Education to educate professional staff and lay boards about the importance of the library, so that they will elevate the library on the institution's scale of priorities to ensure adequate funding for hiring professional librarians, for maintaining a generous schedule of library hours of opening, and for ordering new books and media.
7. A publication should be prepared which is a handbook for rabbis, administrators, and Boards of Jewish Education vis-a-vis the Judaica library.
8. The information gathered in preparing this report makes it possible to revise the Council's publication *Standards for Jewish Libraries*, and this should be done, as it was previously, in cooperation with the Association of Jewish Libraries (JWB Jewish Book Council, 1968, 1970).
9. New criteria for citations should be established, with the current level being considered a "basic" citation and with "intermediate" and "advanced" citations being added. This is necessary, since there are such major differences in the size and funding of synagogue libraries. New, higher-level citations would also provide an incentive for libraries to upgrade their collections and operations.
10. Now that this survey has pinpointed libraries which are in need of assistance, the Council should:

(Continued on p. 96)

we informed the congregation through the Temple Bulletin that video-cassettes were being offered, circulation became heavy. Placing a short-term loan restriction on this material became essential. Shortly thereafter, other video items were added. The video-cassette collection is located in an area where it is readily available and visible to our patrons.

The collection now includes additional material on Israel as well as material on Hebrew language self-study, Israel song and dance, Jewish folklore, holidays, and the Holocaust. Again, the same acquisition theory was applied: we have chosen to acquire video-cassettes on subjects that have demonstrated high circulation in the print component of the collection.

Other synagogue libraries may apply the above techniques to build an audio-visual collection and encourage its use. The editor of this column welcomes contributions from librarians who have employed other innovative techniques in the acquisition and cataloging of Jewish non-print media.

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*Dr. Ralph R. Simon is the Librarian of the Sindell Library, Temple Emanu El, University Heights, Ohio. He completed his dissertation on the acquisition of audio-visual media in libraries at Case Western Reserve University.*

**Posner** (Continued from p. 94)

- aid them in revitalizing their libraries;
- aid them in networking with other libraries;
- encourage them to develop contacts with the Association of Jewish Libraries, the Council, and other helpful library organizations;
- consider new publications which would be helpful to those libraries in need of assistance; and
- provide telephone consultations, if necessary.

It is clear that the JWB Jewish Book Council can no longer work alone on the certification of Judaica libraries. Continued monitoring of libraries which have received citations and the setting of standards for quality library service must be done in conjunction with the Association of Jewish Libraries.

## References

- Cedarbaum, Sophia N. *A Manual for Jewish Community Center, School, and Congregation Libraries*. New York: JWB Jewish Book Council, 1962. (Superseded by: Berman, Margot S. *How to Organize a Jewish Library: A Source Book and Guide for Synagogue, School, and Center Libraries*. New York: JWB Jewish Book Council, 1982.)
- Standards for a Jewish Library*, prepared by the Association of Jewish Libraries, SSC Division. New York: JWB Jewish Book Council, 1968; revised edition, 1970.

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# If you care about JEWISH BOOKS

For more than 40 years, the JWB Jewish Book Council has been working to stimulate the writing, publishing, and reading of worthy books of Jewish interest. It is motivated by deep conviction that these books make an invaluable contribution to the Jewish people. The Council's many activities include:

- ☆ Jewish Book Month, celebrated annually throughout the United States and Canada.
- ☆ The National Jewish Book Awards
- ☆ The Jewish Book Annual, recognized as the most comprehensive and authoritative survey of Jewish literary creativity in English, Hebrew, and Yiddish.
- ☆ The quarterly Jewish Book World with information on new books, available free on request.
- ☆ Suggested reading lists on a variety of topics, and much more.

*Write for a brochure about the Council and its publications. 1987 Jewish Book Month will be celebrated November 16th- December 16th, and a wonderful kit (posters, bookmarks and publications) is available for \$20.00.*



**JWB Jewish Book Council**  
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