

# Hands-On Museum Librarianship: at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Library



COLLEGE OF  
**INFORMATION**  
STUDIES

**Rachel Mauro**

**Field Study Supervisor: Lenore Bell**

**Professor: Diane Barlow**

## About the Field Study



The library opened on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) in 1993. Though available to the public, it primarily serves as a research center for scholars, Museum staff and survivor families. The collection features rare books from the time of the Third Reich and World War II, memoirs, journals, conferences, fiction, and more relating to the Holocaust and other genocides. Patrons also have limited access to archival holdings such as oral histories and microform from international repositories.

My general goal when accepting this internship was to gain a wide variety of experience in how a small library is run, along with supporting overall operations. In my four months at the USHMM Library, I have processed new and rare books into the collection, learned copy cataloging and some original cataloging, created a record for and re-housed a newsletter collection, assisted with donation acknowledgement letters, taken part in discussions about book auctions, and much more.

Thanks to this experience, I am far more confident about entering into, as well as understanding the information field and special collections management.

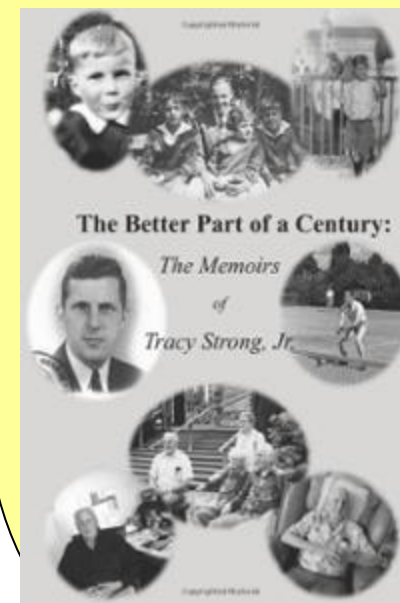


Poster outside USHMM

## Copy Cataloging

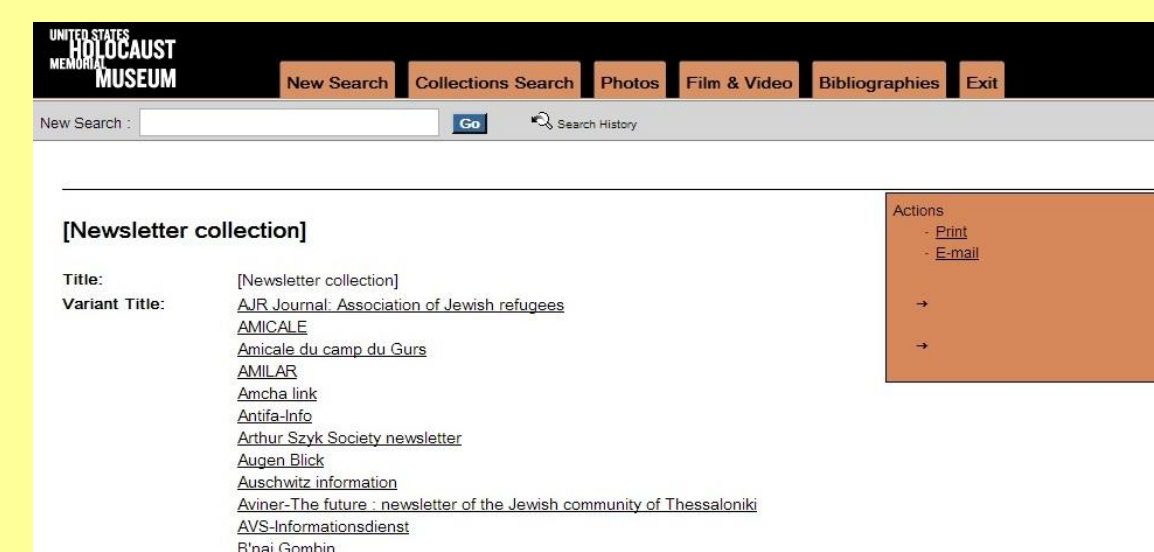
One of the biggest, ongoing projects at the Library is the routine processing of a backlog of books. A common point-of-entry for me revolved around adding “second copies” of books to the OPAC or searching OCLC through Connexion to see if another institution had created a catalog record that we could download and use.

In searching for usable records, I learned to pay special attention to levels of clearance, foreign subject headings, authority files, etc.



The Library features several books not yet catalogued in the United States due to self-publication or foreign provenance. Working with staff, I submitted original cataloging to OCLC for the book pictured here.

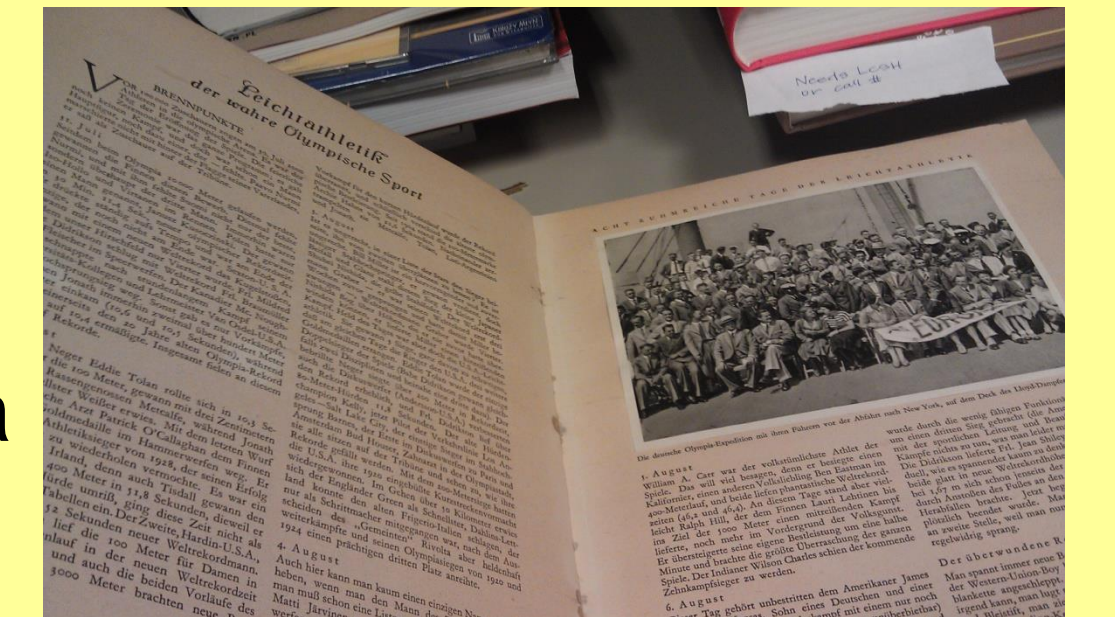
## The Newsletter Record



The USHMM Library receives several unsolicited newsletters, pertaining to the Holocaust, from international organizations. I created a record in the OPAC listing all of the separate titles, then re-housed them alphabetically in folders in a staff member’s office. Now they are available to the public!

## The Shay Collection

I processed a donation of rare books, including Nazi paraphernalia and other period texts.



Rare books generally include materials published before 1949. I utilized search optimization tools in the Library OPAC, OCLC and Google to ascertain if these books fit the scope of the collection. I also re-housed rare materials.

## Donations

The Library receives several book donations from survivors and others, which require acknowledgement letters and data entry into a record-keeping system.

When collections are offered they must be searched in the OPAC to determine duplication.

## The Auction Process

My supervisor regularly takes part in auctions by phone put on by rare book sellers. I sat in on meetings and learned about using designated funds for collections.

