

# Jewish Women in America

An Historical Encyclopedia

*edited by*

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SPONSORED BY THE AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY



VOLUME II

M-Z



Routledge  
New York • London  
1997

theater and wrote about subjects such as child care facilities, the lives of insane women, immigrant life, and women who worked in cranberry bogs in New Jersey. She also covered the popular expositions of her day.

Moss published stories, novellas, contemporary criticism, and articles in magazines including *Bookman*, *Atlantic Monthly*, and *The Nation*. Two published novels, "Julian Meldohla" in *Lippincott's Magazine* (1903) and "Judith Liebestraum" in *Scribner's* (1904), have Jewish themes. She published two novels, *A Sequence in Hearts* (1903) and *The Poet and the Parish* (1906).

Beginning in 1892, Moss and Owen Wister, writer and friend, performed publicly in a piano quartet. Together, they traveled to the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. Moss nursed both parents through fatal illnesses and suffered health problems herself before traveling in Europe. Mary Moss died in Catania, Sicily, on April 2, 1914.

#### SELECTED WORKS BY MARY MOSS

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BETH O'SULLIVAN

**MOVIES** *see* **FILM INDUSTRY;**  
**FILMMAKERS, INDEPENDENT;**  
**YIDDISH FILM**

#### MUFFS, YOCHEVED [JUDITH] HERSCHLAG (b. 1927)

During much of her tenure (1964-1990) at the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), Judith Herschlag Muffs worked with major book publishers to correct inaccuracies in their accounts of Jews and Judaism. Stressing accuracy and objectivity, she succeeded in

modifying dozens of textbooks and reference books. Today, inaccurate depictions of Jews have been largely eliminated from educational materials.

She was born Judith Herschlag (Yocheved is her Hebrew name) on August 5, 1927, and grew up in Jamaica, Queens, the youngest of three children. Her father, Alexander Herschlag, and her uncle together owned a wholesale bread bakery. Her mother, May (Friedman) Herschlag, a homemaker, died when she was thirteen years old. She attended Hebrew school, which she loved, and where, when she was about eleven years old, Hashomer Hadati, a religious Zionist youth group, performed.

In early 1946, she dropped out of New York University and went to the Hashomer Hadati training farm in upstate New York, where she learned to cook, mix concrete, and milk cows. In 1947, when she was nineteen, she immigrated illegally to British-controlled Palestine, arriving by unconverted World War II troop carrier within a day of the famed *Exodus* ship, which carried over forty-five hundred survivors from Nazi Europe to Palestine.

She settled with her *garin* [aliyah group] at a kibbutz, where she eventually became kitchen manager, preparing meals and stretching meager food supplies. The kibbutz fought off several Arab attacks during the Israeli War of Independence in 1947-1949. Judith Herschlag served as a messenger during times of alert, learning to throw grenades and to shoot.

Shortly after her return to the United States in late 1949, she started to work for Young Judaea, an educational movement for Zionist youth. She first served as a group leader and then, beginning in 1954, as national program director. Eventually, she wrote five volumes of "Judaeans Leaves," a program guide for group leaders.

While she worked at Young Judaea, she returned to school, attending Queens and Brooklyn colleges. She completed her B.A. degree in sociology in 1952, and went on to do graduate work in sociology and anthropology at New York University.

In 1959, she went to work for the United Synagogue Commission on Jewish Education, an organization that sets policy, develops courses and objectives, and prepares text materials to implement curricula for Jewish religious schools. There, she was editor of a variety of books and publications, including five volumes of *Our Age*, a biweekly for high school students.

She organized and participated in countless interfaith seminars and institutes at Christian seminaries and universities from the 1960s through the 1980s. In the late 1960s she coproduced the ADL-Catholic Archdiocese of New York twelve-part television series



*The Image of the Jew in Literature* and *Jews and Their Religion*, featuring, among others, Elie Wiesel and Yitz Greenberg. Her study in the 1970s, "Jewish Textbooks on Jesus and Christianity," appears in the Vatican publication *Fifteen Years of Catholic-Jewish Dialogue* (1988). In the 1980s she was on the task force of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops to develop and promote an accurate account of Jews and Judaism in Catholic education.

On April 5, 1970, she married Rabbi Yochanan Muffs, distinguished service professor of Bible studies at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. The couple has an apartment in Jerusalem, where they spend part of every year, and Muffs has both American and Israeli citizenship.

Muffs was a consultant and a contributor to numerous books, films, and television documentaries on the Holocaust. Her *The Holocaust in Books and Films: A Select and Annotated Bibliography* has been published in three editions since its initial publication in 1978. She also cowrote and acted in the ADL presentation of *Women vs. the System*, produced by ABC-TV.

Muffs considers her work at the ADL a continuation and expansion of her earlier commitments to Judaism, interfaith understanding, and civil rights. At the ADL she has served as director of special projects, associate director of interreligious affairs, director of research and curriculum, and associate director of publications. She retired from the ADL in 1990, and continues to consult for them on major projects.

Throughout her entire professional career, Muffs has striven to promote love of Judaism among Jewish young people, and understanding of Judaism among those of other faiths.

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DIANE M. SHARON

## MUSEUMS, JEWISH

Jewish women play prominent roles as founders, directors, curators, artists, and patrons of Jewish museums in the United States. While women have rarely played an exclusive role in the creation of either small community or larger museums, their work as creators and developers of these repositories is critical.

#### HISTORY

Jewish museums emerged in several European cities over a short span of years in the late nineteenth century. Emancipation and Enlightenment resulted in the transformation of objects of traditional religious practice, intended for home or synagogue use, into artifacts for passive display. Similar motivation led Judge Mayer Sulzberger to donate twenty-five objects to the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (JTS) in 1904. From this seed, and from the 1944 gift of FRIEDA SCHIFF WARBURG of the neo-Gothic mansion at 92nd Street and Fifth Avenue in New York, grew the Jewish Museum.

The first formalized museum in America dedicated to Judaica was established in 1913, when Hebrew Union College (HUC) organized its museum in Cincinnati. (Reorganized, it became the Skirball Museum in Los Angeles, in 1972.) Throughout its history, the NATIONAL FEDERATION OF TEMPLE SISTERHOODS (renamed the Women of Reform Judaism in 1993) has also played a considerable role in creating Jewish museums, even including in its bylaws that one of the five goals of each sisterhood should be the establishment of a Jewish museum in every synagogue. It is particularly since the Holocaust that Jewish museums in America have flourished. When the Judah L. Magnes Museum, named for the San Francisco rabbi who presided over the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, was established in Oakland, California, in 1962, the words of Rebecca Fromer reflected the new consciousness:

Before the ashes there was life, and that life would be celebrated, and perhaps if we were lucky would constitute restoration of the name and serve to sanctify it. . . . And so, the museum began with a wealth of mind, the desire to share, to make real through something that could be seen and touched, a part of the collective identity we had no other way of knowing.

Across the United States, the new recognition of the need to preserve and document Jewish culture, and through its interpretation to educate a new generation of Jews and non-Jews, motivated founders of Jewish museums. Notable are the B'nai B'rith Klutznick