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The TCL Letter

Volume 9, issue 2

Fall 2009

Librarian Profile: Chaya Drillman By Caitlin Q. Bernstein

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Caitlin Q. Bernstein, MLS, is a

librarian at Touro College's Midwood Campus.

Like any successful academic institution, Touro College depends upon its libraries to provide a backbone of information and support. For nearly 40 years, Touro has been privileged to have many fine information professionals among its faculty and staff, a legacy which continues to the present day. Of tantamount importance to any discussion of the history of Touro College libraries would be Mrs. Chaya Drillman, librarian at our Midwood campus.

The beginnings of Mrs. Drillman's career as a librarian can be traced to New York's Jewish Institute of Religion, where she served as Library Assistant from 1948-1950. Her dedication to education, Judaism and community is recognizable vis-à-vis twenty-five years of teaching at the Hebrew school of the Glenwood Jewish Center, her published translations of Hebrew works, and numerous lectures conducted at the National Society for Hebrew Day School. She



speaks Hebrew, Yiddish and German fluently.

She has attended the College of Jewish Studies (now Spertus College), Roosevelt University, The New School for Social Research, NYU, and Pratt Institute, where she earned a B.A. in Philosophy, a M.A. in Sociology and a Master of Library Science, among other degrees.

The year 1978 marked the beginning of Mrs. Drillman's career at Touro College. As Women's Divi-

sion Librarian, Drillman organized and catalogued Judaica and Hebraica for Touro's newly created Masters Program in Jewish Studies (the College's Graduate School of Jewish Studies would admit its first class in 1981). From 1989-1994 she served as the Associate Director of Libraries, overseeing the establishment and management of new branch libraries including the new Manhattan Women's Division which opened in 1992 on Manhattan's Lexington Avenue (since relocated to West 60th St.) and the modern Flatbush campus in the Midwood section of Brooklyn (1995).

From 1995-2000 she served as Chief Librarian at the Flatbush Campus and continues to work there as a part-time Librarian, participating in book selection and collection development in support of course offerings. The Touro College Libraries have been fortunate indeed to have Mrs. Drillman's professional service for all these years.

New Online Resources Available to the Touro Community

These proprietary databases and others may be accessed at <http://www.touro.edu/library/sites/FindArticles.asp> and are restricted to the Touro community. To access them remotely, you may request a login and password online, at any of our libraries or by calling 212.463.0400 x5321.

American History in Video provides thousands of hours of online video, including commercial and governmental newsreels, archival footage, public affairs footage, and important documentaries.

Counseling and Therapy in Video provides access to hundreds of therapy sessions, case consultations, training videos, demonstrations, lectures, discussions, and workshops together with doz-

ens of classroom and discussion guides. It includes 276 videos totaling roughly 300 hours, and is searchable by therapist, subject, theme and types of therapy.

NetAnatomy includes anatomical and radiological tutorials to teach human anatomy. It also may be used to review anatomy during clinical rotations, and for USMLE (National Board) preparation.

JSTOR Arts & Sciences VII Collection, and Health & General Sciences Collection - Arts & Sciences VII offers over 180 titles from 35 disciplines in the arts, humanities, and social sciences, representing the largest cluster of health policy titles in JSTOR. Health & General Sciences features over 25 important historical scientific journals, offering published scientific research dating as far back as 1665.

From the Director...

Bashe Simon

Welcome to the new academic year. As the semester begins I would like to highlight some of the Touro College libraries' accomplishments. In April the Touro College Business library officially moved from Midtown to 65 Broadway. Annette Carr, the business librarian, and Salvatore Russo, the Assistant Director of Libraries for Public Services, worked diligently to shelve the books and periodicals and establish the new library. Please visit the new facility which is up and running.

The Library Catalog was enhanced this year to allow easier and more comprehensive searching. The catalog now includes all physical items, including print periodicals and their backfiles in the library collections. It is now possible to search for Hebrew titles using Hebrew characters. Staff and students can easily find new acquisitions in the fields of business, education, psychology and social work, which are listed in the "New Books" feature which was

added to the catalog in November 2008.

This year we increased the number of electronic resources to further aid in research. The new databases include LearningExpress Library, GreenFile, Encyclopedia Talmudit Add-On to Bar Ilan University Responsa, Education Index Retro, Oxford Journals, and NetAnatomy. We added "Spotlight of the Month" to our web site's home page, to highlight new databases and services. We appreciate your feedback in evaluating the research resources.

Part of our mission is to foster intellectual discovery by providing resources and services that support and promote the College's programs. The accomplishments that the Touro College libraries have achieved this year aid us in reaching that goal.

Thank you to all of the staff and students who responded to the spring "User Satisfaction Survey." It was heartening to see that over 50% of the students use the library five times or more per week and

that 68% visit the library to use our online databases. We are pleased that 53% found the library staff helpful and approachable. Over 60% found that the Touro Library provides services that meet their expectations for an excellent library. I want to express my appreciation to the respondents and offer assurance that we will continue striving to improve and follow up on your suggestions.



Bashe Simon, MLS,
is the Director of
Libraries at
Touro College.

Personnel Update

Congratulations!!

- **Liba Geltzer**, librarian at the Lander College for Men, and Mr. Gershon Mack were married on August 30th.
- Judaica Cataloger **Leiba Rimler's** latest book *Hosting Without Boasting* has been published.
- Systems Librarian **Yitzchak Schaffer** was featured in METRO's July 2009 Digitech e-Newsletter, regarding "Emeraldview," a PHP-based front-end he created for Greenstone, an open source digital collection management application.

Meetings, Conferences and Workshops

- 4-28-09 - Midtown Librarian **Carol Schapiro** attended "Effective Chat Reference" at METRO. The work-

shop provided hands-on exposure to synchronous online reference services. The reference interview was discussed in detail, as were strategies for handling inappropriate patron behaviors.

- 5-19-09 - Information Literacy Librarian **Sara Tabaei** attended a workshop at METRO on WINK, a freeware that allows library trainers to create online tutorials for self-paced learners and distance-learning students.
- 6-12-09 - Archivist **Philip Papas** attended "Introduction to Media Preservation" at IMAP. This workshop covered issues and strategies necessary to preserve videotape.
- 8-6-09 - Archivist **Philip Papas** and Systems Librarian **Yitzchak Schaffer** attended a Digital Preservation Symposium hosted by the Center for Jewish History.

The Touro College Libraries aspire to be the primary resource for intellectual content college-wide.

To fulfill the mission of the college, the libraries foster intellectual discovery and advance information literacy.

www.touro.edu/library

By Philip Papas, Archivist



Philip Papas, MLS,
is the Archivist of
Touro College.

**“No means
of storing
video content
is perfect, or
permanent.”**

Among the many items requiring preservation in the Touro College archives are VHS videotape cassettes. I was fortunate to attend a workshop entitled “Introduction to Media Preservation,” presented by Independent Media Arts Preservation at the School of The International Center of Photography.

The workshop began with an excellent overview of the history of videotape. Building upon technology used to record sound onto magnetic tape, video information was similarly captured via a process developed in Germany during the 1930s. The content is stored by embedding magnetic iron or chromium oxide particles within a plastic binder, similar to fruit suspended in gelatin. This is bonded atop a polyester film tape. This technology was brought to other countries, including the U.S., after the defeat of the Axis powers in WWII. With financial backing from entertainer Bing Crosby, the first videotape was put into use by Ampex in 1956.

Interestingly, videotape originally facilitated televised transmissions, and was not intended for long term preservation. It was used to re-broadcast early television’s live programs hours after their premieres to west coast time zones. After Sony introduced its “prosumer” home video recording system in 1968 (utilizing an open reel 1/2” tape), the videocassette (VHS) format arrived in 1971 and a new market for consumers was born. Rental and purchase of pre-recorded tapes followed, and the use of VCRs in the home reached its peak in the early 1980s.

The presentation went on to describe in thorough detail how a videotape functions and where and how it deteriorates. For example, tapes stored in humid

conditions can develop not only mold, but a condition known as “sticky shed syndrome”, whereupon the oxides are loosened from their binder via hydrolysis. This not only causes the tape windings to adhere to each other, making playback impossible, but also can damage equipment due to oxidation collecting on playback heads.

There are various practices that should be undertaken to preserve videotape collections. Storage in a cool, dry environment, out of direct sunlight, is crucial, with optimal conditions of approximately 50F degrees and a maxi-



mum humidity of 50%. To minimize exposure of content, tapes should be left at their ‘end’ (fully rewound or fast forwarded). They should be stored vertically, with the tape head at the top (typically, a hard VHS case will have its spine up in this position, with information visible). Tabs should be popped out on the cartridge spine to prevent taping over or erasure of content. Some feel that tapes should be ‘exercised’ periodically - played, or at least fast forwarded and rewound - but this may be too time consuming given its meager benefits.

If there was one crucial point one could take away from this wonderful presentation, it would be that no means of storing video content - or any other type of content, for that matter - is perfect, or permanent. Whether one

is a consumer concerned about their treasured home movies and favorite films, or an information professional entrusted with the care of rare and valuable intellectual property, efforts to preserve video never truly end.

While it is absolutely prudent to migrate video content from VHS tape to DVD, the reason is not, as many suspect, because digital is superior to analog formats. In fact, it is primarily because playback equipment (namely, the VCR) is becoming harder and harder to purchase and maintain. If this were not the case, one could just as easily preserve the video content by copying it onto new videotape from time to time.

Not all DVDs are created equal; a blank DVD-R, which uses a dye to record data, is less stable than a replicated (pre-recorded) DVD, which has its content embossed. Video file formats also vary; JPEG 2000 is the current industry standard, adopted by the Library of Congress and most major studios, and features ‘lossless’ compression amongst its preferable attributes. Some compression of video content is needed; uncompressed, only 13 hours of standard definition video can be held by one terabyte of storage space. It is also advantageous to use programs such as Final Cut to edit, correct audio and video quality and create chapters before transferring from VHS to DVD.

At present, it is uncertain how long DVDs will last, and new storage formats may emerge in the future. Video collections will require ongoing care, consisting of optimal storage and periodic review, as well as future migration if DVDs are eventually usurped. Fittingly, this workshop took place on the last day for analog video broadcasts in the USA. This served as proof that while the formats may change, video content need not be lost.

Digital Preservation

By Yitzchak Schaffer and Philip Papas

With the increasingly vast amount of intellectual content being generated in digital form (about 180 billion GB in 2006), what can we do to guarantee the preservation of our cultural legacy for the future? The Digital Preservation Symposium hosted by the Center for Jewish History (CJH) set out to address this and related issues. Sponsored by the Ex Libris Group, the event was directed toward library directors, digital archivists, preservation librarians, and "appropriate thought leaders." Its scope was broad, covering such topics as the increasing need for digital preservation in a "born-digital" world, digital preservation planning activities, commitment and funding that are required in launching a digital preservation program, and key trends in digital preservation technology. The event was also apparently geared to publicizing Ex Libris's new digital preservation system, Rosetta.

The Center for Jewish History houses the collections of five pre-eminent institutions dedicated to Jewish history, culture, and art. The American Jewish Historical Society is a collection of documents, books, paintings, and memorabilia related to the American Jewish community in the Americas from the 16th century to the present. The American Sephardi Federation's records document their dedication to strengthening and unifying the American Sephardic community. The Leo Baeck Institute's library and archives are the single most important source for documenting the history and culture of German-speaking Jewry. Yeshiva University Museum's extensive collections, including rare artifacts, cover more than 2,000 years of Jewish history from the Bronze Age to the present. Finally, the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research focuses on the history and culture of East European Jewry.

Laura Leone, Director of CJH's Library Systems, provided an overview of the Center's digital collections, funding challenges, and their

use of DigiTool, Ex Libris's digital asset management system. Ms. Leone identified the CJH as "the single most important resource outside of Israel" for these types of materials: over 370,000 records are maintained in their archival database. Leone focused on metadata workflow in digitization, detailing the process used with collections from Hadassah (also housed at CJH) and YIVO. Finding aids are stored within a specialized silo in DigiTool, and the existing MARC catalog records were converted to archival EAD records by way of Filemaker Pro, Excel, and a custom XSL stylesheet. CJH has also made use of The Archivist's Toolkit, an open-source archival data management system.

Andrea Buchner, Director of CJH's Gruss Lipper Digital Laboratory, was introduced as the center's "Head of Digital Assets." Buchner focused her excellent presentation on the production equipment and procedures involved in scanning documents, such as large and medium format cameras as well as a flatbed scanner. She also detailed the hardware infrastructure behind the digital collections, including a 12 TB RAID server. Most of these preservation measures were made possible by a recent donation of \$750,000. Even so, more financial support is needed; CJH is currently seeking grant funds from the National Endowment for the Humanities to digitize open-reel audio tapes.

The Symposium keynote speaker was Steve Knight, Associate Director and Program Architect at National Digital Heritage Archive at the National Library of New Zealand. Mr. Knight described in great detail how the National Library formulated and analyzed business requirements for a long-term preservation and access solution and their coming to the understanding that no existing software would fill the Library's needs. He shared how they came to collaborate with Ex Libris to create the new Rosetta software. Mr. Knight also reiterated

a point brought up by other speakers at the event when he commented on the pressing need for a practical definition of 'preservation' in the digital age.

Mike Thuman spoke twice at the event; he is Director of Digital Preservation at Ex Libris. He began his first presentation in a novel way; assistants handed out voting paddles with the words "yes" and "no" on opposite sides, so that the audience could respond visually to several questions regarding digital preservation. The results proved fairly consistent; for example, most attendees had some degree of experience with digital preservation, but many had no knowledge of "OAIS" (Open Archival Information Standard), a long term preservation ISO standard upon which Rosetta is based.

Mr. Thuman echoed the sentiments of the other speakers in stating that digital preservation has not been well-defined. He also stressed the explosive growth of information that was 'born digital' as opposed to reformatted print, videotape and other media. Thuman claimed there are 180 exabytes (180 billion GB) of born-digital content created in 2006; this number is expected to increase tenfold by 2011. Given this explosive growth and lack of definitive means to cope with it, Thuman wondered whether we are currently entering a 'digital dark age' of lost knowledge, and avowed that ongoing data checks are essential to ensure integrity. He summed up by quoting the tagline from an Ex Libris advertisement: "Providing future access requires a preservation solution today."

This symposium was an interesting examination of the problems facing repositories in the digital age. Companies like Ex Libris are focusing on solutions scalable for institutions of various size, based on collection size, budgets and other variables. Hopefully such services will preserve information today and create a digital renaissance in the future.



Yitzchak Schaffer, MLS, is the Systems Manager of Touro College Libraries.

"Are we currently entering a digital dark ages?"

Send newsletter comments and questions to: Newsletter, library@touro.edu

See our archived newsletters online at: www.touro.edu/library/Newsletters