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On May 14, 2014, Joachim Gauck, Federal President of Germany, accepted the Leo Baeck Medal. LBI President Dr. Ronald B. Sobel made the following remarks at LBI’s first Award Dinner in Berlin, held to honor Gauck. For more on the award, see page 6.

Honoring Federal President Joachim Gauck

Dr. Ronald B. Sobel, President of LBI

In 1905, a then young Rabbi Leo Baeck wrote, “What gives our life its worth is what we become, not which family we come from.”

Though the dark shadows of those 12 years between 1933 and 1945 still linger, what Germany has become to herself, to Europe, to the world, and to the Jewish people, is a glory to behold and a benediction to revere.

That same 1905 sentence, like tens and thousands of other sentences authored by Rabbi Baeck over the ensuing decades, reveals his passion for the idealism of universalism and his life-long commitment to enhancing the dignity of every human being, regardless of faith and notwithstanding ethnicity or any other category that divides the human family.

In your life, Mr. President, you too have dramatically and courageously demonstrated an unflagging commitment to individual human worth. The ideas of freedom and democracy lie at the core of your humanness. As Rabbi Leo Baeck was not intimidated by the horrors of Nazi Facism, so you, as well, never cowered beneath the boots of brutal Soviet Communism. Like Rabbi Leo Baeck, Mr. President, you mirror those qualities that make for human greatness. Thus the Leo Baeck Institute honors itself in honoring you.

The Institute was born a decade after the concentration camps were liberated, at a time when the smells of the crematoria in Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Treblinka, and the other places of shame and horror were still polluting the air. A group of leading intellectuals, forced out of Germany and Austria in the 1930s, were determined to preserve the shattered remains of their devastated heritage—a heritage that was, and today remains, integral to the history of Germany itself.

It is simply impossible to fully understand or completely appreciate the history of Germany, especially its 19TH- and 20TH-century narratives, without simultaneously knowing the richness of German-speaking Jewry’s contributions to literature, music, medicine, the arts, and religion.

This is why the Institute was created and in the process has become the world’s largest archival and research center devoted exclusively to documenting this vast history of creative richness over multiple centuries. With offices and centers in New York, Berlin, London, and Jerusalem, we are, and will continue to be, a rebuke to Nazism and a repudiation of Hitler. We work to ensure that Germany and the world will long remember and revere the contributions German Jews gave to the country they loved.

Mr. President, again, we thank you for allowing us to honor you.
Above: Portraits featured in LBI’s current exhibition, Facing History
Cover Image: Artist unknown
Unidentified mother and daughter
Germany, mid-19th century.
These portraits of a mother and daughter show the cultural dynamics in a German-Jewish family of the mid-19th century. The mother’s dress adheres to traditional conventions of modesty, including a bonnet and possibly a Sheitel to cover her hair, while the daughter confidently wears her natural hair in ringlets and sports a low-cut dress that emphasizes her décolletage and jewelry.

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Thanks to a gift from a trust under the will of Edythe Griffinger, LBI has begun work on a project that will highlight its art collection. The $100,000 grant will allow LBI to make the collection more accessible through the creation of a virtual art catalogue based on high-quality digital images of important holdings and a web portal that will allow the public to view artworks and artifacts that are rarely if ever on public display.

Although the collection encompasses about 8,000 objects, which range from significant works by artists such as Max Liebermann and Moritz Daniel Oppenheim to centuries-old ritual objects used in German-Jewish communities, only a small subset is currently available through DigiBaeck, LBI’s gateway to its digital collections.

“This has been effectively a hidden collection,” said LBI Art Curator Renata Stein. “In addition to the marquee works, we have an incredibly rich collection of objects that show the daily lives of German Jews, but many of them are difficult to put on public display.” She cited intricately woven bridal bonnets from the 18TH century, banners of 19TH-century Jewish fraternities, and brass Sabbath lamps used in Jewish homes as examples of items that the project will make accessible for the first time.

Executive Director William Weitzer said that cataloguing and digitizing these types of items will help not only students and scholars, but also professionals such as museum curators, documentary filmmakers, and educational publishers find and use the items. “By making our collection more accessible to a broad range of individuals and groups, our art and artifacts will be better utilized and the mission of LBI better known,” said Weitzer.

Project staff have begun conducting an inventory of high-priority items in the art collection and drafting a coding scheme that will aid access and discovery.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, Jews from the former Soviet Union came to Germany and the Jewish community grew tenfold. Today, the first generation of children born to these new immigrants has reached adulthood. Educated in German schools and universities, they make up a new generation of Jews in Germany.

One sign of the new energy that this community has brought to Jewish life in Germany is the success of the Jewish educational festival Limmud, which is organized by volunteers from both the new immigrant population and the established post-war community. These non-denominational festivals, open to all Jews regardless of religious belief or background, have taken place in countries across the world for the past 30 years.

Limmud Germany held its seventh annual festival at a resort outside Berlin from May 29–June 1, 2014. About 400 participants attended workshops that spanned topics from Hebrew language to Jewish cuisine and beyond.

This year, Leo Baeck Institute was also present with a workshop discussing a topic that had rarely been covered at prior Limmud festivals in Germany—German-Jewish history before 1933. Then, as now, large segments of the community included immigrants from Eastern Europe and their descendants.

“Especially since German Jewry has seen such a tremendous transformation in its recent past, it’s important to learn about, and be aware of, its more distant past,” said Jonathan Marcus, chair of Limmud Germany. “LBI thus brought an important contribution to Limmud Germany 2014.”

Frank Mecklenburg, LBI’s Director of Research, led a well-attended workshop on “German-Jewish history and why it is important for the future.” Following his introduction to the history and mission of LBI as the archive and library of the pre-1933 German-Jewish community, the participants engaged in a productive discussion about parallels and differences between the current and past German-Jewish communities as well as aspects of nationality, language, and identity in German-Jewish life then and now.

“It’s the mix of Jewish learning opportunities that Limmud offers, along with the unique social space it creates, which are at the heart of its continued success,” said Marcus. “And Limmud is the sum of contributions of all participants, so we’re looking forward to more learning opportunities with LBI in the future.”
Wikipedians Write the Book on LBI Collections

Until recently, an Internet search for Selma Stern-Täubler, the author of seminal works on the history of Jews in Prussia, turned up relatively scant resources for an English speaker. Among the top results were a well-researched but brief biography at Jewish Women’s Archive and some digitized academic monographs. It took some digging to discover that the professional and personal papers of one of the first and foremost women scholars of German-Jewish history are held in the LBI Archives. The user-edited encyclopedia Wikipedia, the first stop on many online journeys, offered nothing.

On Saturday, May 4, 2014, staff and volunteers at the Center for Jewish History (CJH) took steps to change that. At the first public CJH Wikipedia Edit-a-thon, about 30 volunteers, including CJH and LBI staff, members of the local NYC Wikimedia Chapter, and scholars and librarians from other institutions spent an afternoon creating and improving Wikipedia articles related to women in Jewish History. In addition to Stern-Täubler, sculptor Erna Weill, artist Greta Loebl, journalist Toni Stolper, and educator Elisabeth Freund now have pages on the world’s sixth most visited website. For those who want to learn more about these figures, the articles include links to digitized holdings at LBI. In total, 15 new pages were created, four pages were expanded with references or biographical information, and at least seven newly minted “Wikipedians” made their first contributions to the world’s largest encyclopedia.

Meeting users where they are

Wikipedia already dominates search results for topics both esoteric and pedestrian, and there is a growing movement among librarians and archivists to harness that power to improve access to special collections. Grassroots initiatives such as “GLAM-Wiki” (short for Galleries, Libraries, Archives, and Museums) are an expression of the deepening partnerships between the community of Wikipedians and cultural heritage institutions.

“Libraries and museums recognize that the best way to expand access to their collections and reach new audiences is to meet users where they are, and that is on Wikipedia,” says Dorothy Howard, the Wikipedian-in-Residence hired by the New York Metropolitan Council of Libraries to facilitate deeper engagement among its member libraries with Wikipedia. There is hard data to back up that assessment. Dominic McDevitt-Parks, the Digital Content Specialist at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), has reported that in 2013 more digitized government documents were discovered through Wikipedia (1.27 billion) than through NARA’s own website, archives.gov (96 million).

Wikipedia in the archivist’s toolkit

With millions of pages of digitized material of their own to manage, LBI and the other partners at the CJH want to emulate that success. CJH archivists who process and organize archival collections have already built Wikipedia into their workflow, making appropriate edits to Wikipedia whenever they finish work on a collection.

This is not necessarily time consuming, as CJH archivist Leanora Lange explains, “I most commonly make edits like adding a link to the finding aid for an individual or organization whose papers I just processed.” Other small but significant improvements include adding authority control numbers (distinct identifiers agreed on by libraries to avoid confusion about similarly named people or topics) or quickly organizing biographical information into forms that can be accessed by the “linked open data” engines that are at the vanguard of new web services like Google’s Knowledge Graph.

Their most important contribution, however, gets to the heart of how Wikipedia functions—filling in gaps and improving information. “Wikipedia is imperfect. So are many other reference resources,” says Lange. “If you don’t think Wikipedia is good enough, create an account and make it better!”

“If you don’t think Wikipedia is good enough, create an account and make it better!”
—LEANORA LANGE, CJH ARCHIVIST

Leanora Lange (c), an archivist at the Center for Jewish History, explains the basics of Wikipedia editing to new Wikipedians at the Edit-a-thon on May 4, 2014.

ONLINE

LBI and CJH on GLAM-Wiki
lbi.org/wiki
lbi.org/cjh-wiki

Join the Wikimedia NYC mailing list to learn about future events
nyc.wikimedia.org
Federal President of Germany, Joachim Gauck, Awarded Leo Baeck Medal in Berlin

On May 14, 2014, LBI President Dr. Ronald B. Sobel presented the Leo Baeck Medal to the Federal President of Germany, Joachim Gauck. It was the first time LBI awarded its highest honor in Berlin, at a dinner to mark the opening of an LBI New York office in the German capital.

“Leo Baeck and Berlin once belonged together and are posthumously growing together again,” said Federal President Gauck, who was clearly moved to be the first honoree to be presented with the medal in Germany. He called the Institute's presence in Berlin a sign of the growing return of Jewish life to Germany. The new LBI office is not only a cultural and academic enrichment, Gauck said, but also an important symbol of the Jewish life that once so strongly enriched Germany.

“The Holocaust is an inherent and indispensable part of our memory, and that will remain so in the future,” the Federal President said. “But we also want to anchor the many other facets of German-Jewish history in the collective memory of the nation again. That’s why it is so important that the Leo Baeck Institute exists.”

With the generous support of the Federal Commissioner for Culture and Media, LBI New York was able to establish an office in Berlin in July 2013 to maintain and deepen relations with scholars, Jewish communities, government and corporate sponsors, and the wider public. Since 2001, researchers have had access to LBI archival collections at the Jewish Museum Berlin.

An “Unflagging commitment to individual human worth”

Dr. Sobel said that, like Leo Baeck, the German president had “dramatically and courageously demonstrated an unflagging commitment to individual human worth.”

“The ideas of freedom and democracy lie at the core of your humanness,” said Dr. Sobel, who also lauded Federal President Gauck’s role in the opposition movement that helped end the single-party dictatorship in East Germany and bring down the Berlin Wall.
In-Focus: Leo Baeck Medal for Federal President Joachim Gauck

Ambassador Wolfgang Ischinger, former German Ambassador to the United States and current Global Head of Government Relations for Allianz SE, said that Federal President Gauck was a natural choice for the first Leo Baeck Medal to be awarded in Germany. “Who else is so apt at powerfully conveying the importance of memories and the past to citizens in Germany and elsewhere, while at the same time, with his active commitment to freedom and responsibility, focusing on the future as a positive aspect?” asked Ischinger in remarks that were read by Ambassador Hans-Jürgen Heimsoeth, Germany’s Permanent Representative to the OECD in Paris.

“Mr. President, you have succeeded again and again in finding the right words, especially to describe the darkest chapters of German history,” wrote Ischinger, who was unable to attend the ceremony because he had been dispatched to Kiev to participate in talks aimed at resolving the crisis in the Ukraine.

Ambassador Ischinger and Allianz SE were the very gracious sponsors of the LBI dinner, which was held in the beautiful Allianz Forum at Pariser Platz, facing the Brandenburg Gate.
Erhard Roy Wiehn—“Wer schreibt, der bleibt!”

Erhard Roy Wiehn, born 1937 in Saarbrücken, is a Professor Emeritus of Sociology at the University of Constance who has edited one of the largest series of monographs about Jewish life in Europe. His “Edition Schoah und Judaica” now encompasses nearly 280 books, mostly autobiographical accounts of Jewish life in Europe before, during, and after the Holocaust. We spoke to him about memory, authenticity, and obsession.

How did you first become interested in this topic?

Early after WWII, I was a very active little Boy Scout in the German scouting organization called the Pfadfinder. Two sisters by the name of Schwarzschild volunteered to lead the youngest scouts, the Wölflinge (Wolf Cubs), and they sometimes came to our home for scout meetings. They had survived the Gurs Internment camp in France, and I learned a lot about their experience.

That planted certain seeds in my mind that would bear fruit years later, and the early 1980s was the right time in the development of my academic career to make this topic my focus.

You were trained as a sociologist. What is the relationship between sociology and your work on the Holocaust?

My earliest topic was social inequality. I wrestled with the early social philosophers, from Aristotle to Plato and on to Karl Marx and many others, following the thread of inequality. Of course, the same thread can easily lead to the Shoah, which is the most extreme example of unequal treatment one can imagine.

How did your first publications come about?

In the early 1980s, I had a close relationship with the Jewish community of Constance. The chairman was a survivor from Warsaw, and there were many other Polish families in the community. In 1983, they received an invitation to travel to Poland for the 40th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. I became involved early on and actually persuaded many of them to participate; they had never wanted to return to Poland. I was able to interview most of the participants during the trip, and those interviews became our first book, Kaddisch - Totengebet in Polen.

The ball got rolling very quickly especially thanks to word of mouth among what you might call the Landsmannschaften, or communities of Jewish immigrants from specific regions.

German-language publications like the Stimme of the Bukovina Jews or the Israel Nachrichten published reviews of our books, and word got around.

When did it become clear that you had taken on a task that you would never finish, but which you could also not stop?

I was always a bit ambivalent. On the other hand, you have to slog through each new manuscript and all the individual fates that it contains. Then you say, “Okay, we did it! One person fewer will be forgotten.” On the other hand it’s clear that it’s no more than a drop in the ocean.

The longer you do this, however, the more it becomes an obsession. It’s worth struggling through the manuscript and printing it, because then it’s preserved.

What are some examples of stories that affected you deeply?

That could take all evening, and many of the authors have become cherished friends. To name a recent example, though, we published a book by Herman Abraham called Unter rotem Nordlicht. He was a Romanian Jew who just barely survived the Romanians and the Germans. Then he joined the Red Army to fight the Germans, but he was accused of spying for the Romanians, or even the Germans. He was sentenced to years of hard labor in the Vorkuta Gulag. In his final years, he emigrated to Israel and wrote this book, which has an aura that can absolutely be compared to Solzhenitsyn.

I’ll name an early example as well. Zwi Helmut Steinitz wrote Durch Zufall im Holocaust gerettet, which tells the unbelievable fate of his family from Posen. After the Nazi occupation, his parents were sent to Belzec, where the first extreme murders using poison gas took place. Steinitz himself was spared, because during the selection he happened to switch lines. After 1948, he emigrated very early to Israel, where he cobbled together, with virtually zero experience, a career in the flower industry. He became a pioneer for the export of Israeli roses to Holland.

Are there manuscripts that you choose not to publish?

Yes. It is our foremost priority to ensure that the stories are authentic and from credible authors. Sometimes there are problems because, after so many years, memories become clouded.

For example, there was a man in America, originally from Frankfurt, who escaped early and then returned with the American troops as a liberator. He wrote that he had arrived at Buchenwald with Patton’s army and seen the famous inscription over the gate, “Arbeit macht frei.”

I wrote him back, “I’m sorry, but you are mistaken. That was Auschwitz. Buchenwald’s motto was ’Jedem das Seine.’” He became angry, but I told him that if he insisted, then he could find another publisher. We will not publish something that is not credible, even if it’s only a single line.
Is it difficult for the authors to write these books?

Absolutely. Take Zwi Steinitz from Posen. He had repressed it all his life. When his oldest child asked him, “Father, what’s that number on your arm?” he would make up a story—that it was a telephone number he didn’t want to forget or something.

It wasn’t until he retired that he fell into a deep pit, so to speak, and everything came back to him. He sought psychological counseling, and only then did he begin to write.

Some authors also realize when they sit down to write that their German is a bit rusty. That does not stop many from writing books of excellent literary quality. We published one book by a Croatian author who served as a doctor in Tito’s partisan army and much later became a professor of medicine in Switzerland. He wrote his book in a sort of German—let’s just say that it was 1000 percent better than my Croatian, but I don’t speak any Croatian! Editing the book was an arduous process, but in the end it won the literature prize of the City of Bern. The author identified so closely with the final version of the book that he didn’t even remember what the original looked like!

The generation that experienced the Holocaust as children will soon be gone. What does that mean for your work?

We just celebrated the 101st birthday of our oldest author, Gretel Baum-Merom, together with her in Haifa in February. Even our youngest authors are all past their mid-80s.

However, the second generation is now bringing us their parents’ texts. Or, descendants often donate their parents’ materials to institutions like LBI or Yad Vashem, where they are saved until someone finds them and does something with them.

In recent years, I’ve been working through things as quickly as possible while the authors are still alive. Once the author is gone, it is so much harder. There are questions that no one can answer.

How do you hope this resource gets used?

There a large body of comparable material, but there is hardly another single edition of this scope, breadth, and structure. I think that we have succeeded, with more luck than strategy, in making a contribution to what I see as the sociology of the 20th century for the 21st century.

I hope that it can continue a while longer. I’ve been retired for a few years now, and I’m able to work about nine to ten hours a day on these texts, a bit less on the weekends. I think that’s the best way to spend my precious time.

Nine to ten hours a day! Where do you find the energy?

One factor is the awareness that one really can do something against forgetting. With every page you edit, you have done something against forgetting. As the German saying goes, “Wer schreibt, der bleibt”—whoever writes, remains!

Jerry Brotman—Hands-on Volunteer

He is neither a scholar nor a librarian, but Jerry Brotman knows the LBI Library Collection more intimately than anyone else. In 2014, he claimed the singular distinction of being the only person in history to lay hands on every cataloged monograph in the Library’s 80,000-volume collection. Over the past eight years, Brotman affixed barcodes to some 66,000 books, a labor as important to the functioning of a library as it is, some might say, tedious.

“I didn’t find it a chore,” says Brotman, who has volunteered at LBI about six hours per week since his retirement in 2006. “It was a diversion, and it broke up the week.”

Not everyone shared his outlook. Initially invited to work on the barcoding because of what he calls a “Neanderthal attitude toward computers,” Brotman endured where others quit. The stacks on the 12th floor of the CJH are windowless, cool, and silent—a perfect atmosphere for books, but not for volunteers looking to enjoy their retirements.

“They’d say it was too cold, too isolated, too grim,” says Brotman. “So I found myself alone with this mammoth undertaking.”

Curiosity intact

In 2006, Brotman retired from what he wryly calls a “mediocre career” in the financial services industry. “Somehow I escaped with my curiosity unscathed.”

That curiosity brought him to Yeshiva University Museum’s landmark exhibit “A Perfect Fit: The Garment Industry and American Jewry” at the CJH in 2005. Brotman was moved by the way it reflected his family’s history. Born in 1937 to a Jewish family of tailors in New York, he later moved to Jewish Museum’s landmark exhibit “A Perfect Fit: The Garment Industry and American Jewry” at the CJH in 2005. Brotman was moved by the way it reflected his family's history. Born in 1937 to a Jewish tailoring family in New York, he later moved to...
family in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, Brotman had two aunts and a great uncle who had been garment workers. He remembered his mother’s stories about the working conditions in the factories and the workers’ struggle to organize.

Renate Evers, Director of the LBI Library, is grateful Brotman discovered the CJH that day and volunteered his services after his retirement the next year. Barcoding is a task that demands physical fitness and the ability to read and understand bibliographic descriptions.

“It’s very hard to find someone with the required diligence, meticulousness, and patience, and we are lucky that we did in Jerry,” says Evers. She estimates that hiring a commercial vendor to barcode the collection could have entailed a six-figure price tag.

**Instantaneous connection**

Although not all non-circulating special collections libraries use barcodes, Evers says that having them makes an enormous impact on the efficiency of virtually all library tasks.

“They provide an instantaneous connection between the bibliographic metadata and the physical item,” says Evers. Without barcodes, a book can only be located and identified by comparing the title, author, edition, publisher, and other information in the catalog to the physical book. Barcodes are also an absolute prerequisite for offsite storage, which Evers calls a “worst-case scenario” but also an essential consideration for the curator of any growing collection.

The knowledge that it was a valuable task helped keep Brotman going. “I also felt like I was helping someone. I always took it seriously. It’s not a task that someone would have thought up just to keep me busy.”

Thanks to his familiarity with the entire library collection, it is likely Brotman will be busy at LBI for some time to come. “In a way, I’m jealous of him,” says Evers, “He has a feel for the collection like no one else.”

**Gaby Glueckselig: Stammtisch Hostess Celebrates a Century of Bliss**

**Aliza Schulman**

Gaby Glueckselig came to the Leo Baeck Institute in the late 1980s as a volunteer archivist. For years she helped to preserve German-Jewish culture by cataloging the Institute’s extensive photograph collection. On April 27, 2014, Glueckselig returned to LBI to celebrate her 100TH birthday with friends and family.

Many of those friends know Glueckselig as the hostess of New York’s longest running German-language Stammistisch. Founded in 1943 by Vienna-born artist George Harry Asher and Bavarian author Oskar Maria Graf, the weekly gathering became a cultural home for Jewish and non-Jewish émigrés who had fled the Nazi takeover of their beloved Heimat but did not want to leave their culture behind. The group met for years in cafes on the Upper East Side until Glueckselig began hosting the group in her Yorkville apartment.

In recent years, the Stammistisch has also attracted younger Germans and Austrians who work or study in New York, including many LBI interns and volunteers. In particular, the volunteers of the Gedenkdienst, a program in which young Austrians spend a year at LBI conducting oral history interviews, have become a fixture at the Stammistisch. Longtime members say that the intergenerational friendships that have arisen injected new energy into the Stammistisch.

Ruben Braunschmid, a Gedenkdiener at LBI, attends the meetings every Wednesday. As a young Austrian in a foreign country, he says he is grateful for the Stammistisch as a “social home, a place where I feel welcome.” Much of that gratitude goes to the hostess Glueckselig. “Gaby’s greatest strength is her sense of humor,” says Braunschmid. “Sometimes you think she’s not catching all the conversation, but then she will interrupt something so sharp and funny that the whole group laughs.”

**Gabrielle (“Gaby”) Glueckselig** (née Netter), was born in Wiesbaden in 1914. She studied to become a goldsmith in Pforzheim and emigrated to New York in September 1938. In New York she met and married the poet Leo Glueckselig, a fellow refugee from Vienna. Following her career as a jewelry maker, Glueckselig worked as a volunteer in the LBI Archives as well as at the Jewish Museum in Wiesbaden.

Left: Glueckselig as an infant in Wiesbaden in 1915.

Below: Glueckselig celebrates her 100TH birthday at Leo Baeck Institute.
Mahlzeit! A Tasting Menu from LBI Collections

For the displaced, uprooted, or simply homesick, familiar foods provide a comfort and connection to home that is second perhaps only to language. Thus, it is no surprise that so many Jewish refugees in the 1930s managed to find room in their overstuffed bags and trunks for cherished cookbooks—from published classics to handwritten recipe books to binders full of clippings and index cards.

Many of these materials found their way into LBI collections, and LBI is now working to digitize a number of important published cookbooks in its collections. In the process, some librarians and archivists recently decided to try their hand at cooking some of the antiquarian delicacies contained within. What follows is an overview of some of the most interesting cookbooks. To read about specific recipes from the books, visit:

ONLINE
lbi.org/mahlzeit

Julie Elias was a fashion journalist in Weimar Berlin who wrote for Jewish publications as well as mainstream ladies’ magazines like Die Dame. In 1925 she wrote Das neue Kochbuch, in which she discusses cooking as it relates to the latest developments in hygiene and health. Elias frequently infused Jewish ideas into her writing for mainstream audiences, and the recipes in this book include distinctly Jewish ones, such as matzah balls. Many recipes are credited to prominent Jewish figures such as Bertha Liebermann, the wife of painter Max Liebermann, or the fashion writer Elsa Herzog.

The first edition of Rebekka Wolf’s cookbook was published in 1851, making it one of the first Jewish cookbooks published in German. Although other practical cookbooks existed, Wolf may have filled a gap for Jewish households. All of her dishes were written with Jewish religious practices in mind; she explained the process of how to prepare kosher meat and set up a kosher kitchen. The book was continually expanded and revised across 14 editions through 1933.

What sets Kauders’ cookbook apart from its contemporary competition was her emphasis on cooking as an artform. In the introduction to her “Complete Cookbook,” she compares cooks to sculptors who create monuments out of raw materials. She adds that the products of the art of cooking are, like works of art, a true feast for the eyes which nourishes the body and invigorates the spirits. Kauders received acclaim at culinary exhibitions in Frankfurt and Vienna, and her cookbooks quickly sold out, requiring numerous further editions.

Lina Morgenstern (1830–1909) was an early feminist, activist, and educator whose cookbooks were an outgrowth of her social welfare activities. In response to food shortages caused by the outbreak of the Austro-Prussian War in 1866, she established soup kitchens and began collecting the nutritious yet economical recipes that would form the basis of this book. The application of modern science to nutrition pervades the book in general; Morgenstern describes how fresh, disease-free food looks under a microscope and even suggests that the benefits of pork might be reconsidered by Jews in light of new scientific discoveries. Among the many delicious-sounding dishes like “Austrian-style steamed spring chicken with cream” and “thin peas with beef and bacon” are unusual curative recipes like “snail soup for people suffering from tuberculosis.”

Kahn, Lena. Die Frau auf richtige Fährte [...]. Basel, 1901. [Reprint c. 1999]
Although the title, “The Wife on the Right Track,” does not identify it as specifically Jewish, Kahn’s book includes sections on managing a Jewish kitchen, in particular on preparing meals for the Sabbath and Passover. It differs from other cookbooks of the time in that it includes advice on raising children. The
child-rearing advice is divided into three sections. The first focuses on the child’s physical well-being, the second on spiritual education, and the third on practical guidelines for frugal living, which include a budget for furnishing a home.

Gumprich, Bertha. Vollständiges praktisches Kochbuch für die jüdische Küche. 1896.

Gumprich describes her “Complete, Practical Cookbook” as a resource for inexperienced housewives trying to prepare affordable meals that were both tasty and kosher. As Gumprich writes in her introduction, many cookbooks in the 19th century did not provide guidelines for kosher cooking methods and ingredients, or they weren’t practical for “die einfache bürgerliche Küche” (the simple middle class kitchen). The recipes include exhaustive variations on standards like stuffed chicken as well as more exotic dishes like “ragout made from veal brain, sweetbreads, and tongue.”

Conservation of the Fürth Megillah

Felicity Corkill

Fürth, the smaller twin to the Franconian city of Nuremberg, was home to one of the most prosperous and longest-standing Jewish communities in German-speaking lands. In the 18th century, under the protection of the Provost of the Bamberg Cathedral and the Margrave of Ansbach, the Jews of Fürth enjoyed freedoms unheard of elsewhere in Bavaria—including two reserved seats on the city council. This colorfully illustrated Megillah from Fürth originated in a period when Jews comprised a fifth to a quarter of the city’s population. Felicity Corkill, a conservator at the Center for Jewish History, describes how she prepared this treasure for public display at the CJH during Purim in 2014.

When it arrived in the lab, this hand-painted parchment scroll was tightly rolled and would not lie flat. I observed surface dirt resulting from years of dust and handling, crushed edges, and a few small tears and holes, but otherwise it was in quite good condition.

In order to prepare it for display, I cleaned the surface of both sides of the scroll with soft brushes and smoke-removing sponges. Then the scroll was slowly and gently humidified to relax the parchment before being dried under tension to get it as flat as possible. Small tears and holes were mended with Japanese repair paper and gelatin.

After the exhibition, the scroll came back to the conservation lab and a special storage box was made for it. It is now wrapped around an acid-free cardboard core to prevent tight rolling. This core is suspended on U-shaped brackets inside a pizza-style hinged box, where it will be safely kept in climate controlled storage for future generations to enjoy.

ONLINE
The Fürth Megillah in DigiBaec
lbi.org/fuerth-megillah

Longing, Prayer, Surrender: Diary of an Incredible Journey Translated into English

The year she turned 41, Lene Schneider-Kainer divorced her husband, closed her fledgling business selling designer lingerie to upper class Berlin ladies, and embarked on an 18-month journey to the near East, India, Southeast Asia, and China. “Wonderful peace,” the Vienna native wrote in her diary on the eve of the journey. “My numbness begins to subside. I forget about all the disgust, all the depression, and surrender to everything yet to come. All the longing within me turns into prayer.”

Although the circumstances of Schneider-Kainer’s journey may superficially resemble an early 21st-century memoir of personal catharsis sought and found in exotic locales, the year was 1926, and the trip was all business. Jewish publishing pioneer Rudolf Mosse’s liberal daily, the Berliner Tageblatt, had hired Schneider-Kainer to illustrate dispatches from an epic journey along the route traveled by Marco Polo in 1271.

Schneider-Kainer produced two-thousand photographs, mostly lost, and at least 100 watercolors, now held in the LBI Art Collection, that focused on the lives of women and children in regions that mass tourism would not penetrate for decades, if at all. “We traveled through countries and regions where photographic equipment had never been seen,” she later wrote. “The natives either fled from the camera or created insurmountable obstacles through their sheer curiosity. It was unbelievable to them that a woman could draw and write.”

It was not only “the natives” who were befuddled by Schneider-Kainer’s work. When the expressionist magazine Die Weißen Blätter published a series of her erotic female
nudes in 1915, the idea of a woman painting from human figure models was still scandalous. Critics reacting to her first major exhibition of solo works at Wolfgang Gurlitt’s Berlin gallery in 1917 betrayed the prevailing influence of art historian Karl Scheffler, who had put forth the idea that in art, men naturally occupied the position of subject and women that of object. In Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration, Gustaf Kauder praised Schneider-Kainer for her “unwomanly” approach, which was apparent in the “weighty earnestness of her efforts.” Less open-minded critics strained mightily to account for the apparent artistic competence of a woman. Writing in Kunst für alle, J. Beth surmised that her apparent “adroitness” was owed to her husband, the illustrator Ludwig Kainer.

In the liberal climate of the early Weimar Republic, however, such reactions may have only contributed to a formula for commercial success. Gurlitt published several portfolios of her female nudes in the ensuing years, and in 1920, she illustrated a luxury edition of the ancient Syrian-Greek poet Lucian’s Dialogues of the Courtesans.

Similarly, the notion of a boundary-breaking, independent woman undertaking such a strenuous journey likely made the Berliner Tageblatt expedition more compelling to readers. While the travel writing genre in the 1920s was characterized by explorations of urban life and social progress, such as Ernst Toller’s reporting from the Soviet Union or Egon Erwin Kisch’s portraits of “Paradise America,” the Berliner Tageblatt made the unusual choice to send a reporting team to Asia.

Schneider-Kainer’s co-expedition, Bernhard Kellermann, was an ideal candidate for the job. He had reported from Japan for the Cassirer publishing house in 1907 and later scored a world-wide best-seller with his 1913 novel The Tunnel, about a utopian plan for a transatlantic tunnel. Having lost his wife to heart disease in 1926, he was prepared to remain abroad for a very long time. “Whether I’m coming back, I do not know,” he wrote friends in Denmark on the eve of the journey.

After crossing the Bosphorus strait and the Caucasus, the expedition began in earnest at the Persian Caspian Sea port of Bandar-e Anzali. The team traveled by truck to the carpet-making and trade center of Isfahan in central Persia, where they hired a donkey caravan to bring them the 600 miles south to the Persian Gulf port of Bandar Abbas—a journey of over two weeks.

In Persia, Schneider-Kainer and Kellermann also worked intensively on a documentary film constructed around a local boy’s education. The hour-long film follows eleven-year-old Mohammad Ali as he visits the Bazaar of Isfahan, seeking a master among the cobblers, wood-carvers, carpet-weavers, and coppersmiths. It also follows the bridal caravan of Mohammad’s older sister from Isfahan to the port of Bandar Abbas, where she is to marry a pearl diver.

Given that concern for modesty prevented local women from acting in the film, the artist found herself playing another unexpected role—the part of the veiled bride. For Schneider-Kainer, it was not a fairy-tale ending, but another chapter in an extraordinary life that would lead her around the world many times over.

ONLINE
See more images from Lene Schneider-Kainer’s journey and read her travel diary, translated into English by volunteers Ruth Heimann and Irene Miller
lbi.org/lene-schneider-kainer

LITERATURE
Exhibition: Facing History: Portraits from the LBI Art Collection

At the core of LBI’s Art Collection are well over 1,000 portraits of Jews from Central Europe that reflect the changing cultural dynamics from the 18TH century to the 20TH century. A selection of some of the most interesting portraits is on display in the Katherine and Clifford H. Goldsmith Gallery at the Center for Jewish History this summer.

Portraiture has always been linked with ethnic and national identity. Jews, however, observing the commandment against graven images, traditionally refrained from having their likeness painted. This reluctance was reinforced by the absence of Jewish artists. Barred from the artistic guilds, Jews first became involved in the visual arts only in the 19TH century.

The pictorial representation that developed became particularly significant because many Christians used these images as their only reference to Jews. Social restrictions limited direct contact, which meant Christians rarely had an opportunity to meet a Jew in person.

The rapid spread of portraiture among German Jews was spurred by the veneration many congregants felt for their rabbis, whose portraits became much desired icons. Later, as Jews established themselves in the middle class, they wanted their importance as individuals recognized and immortalized for posterity. Portraiture thus became a social agent that not only conveyed a public image of Jews, but also served as an expression of their self-awareness and affirmed their status to other Jews.

New York Events

PANEL DISCUSSION
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2014, 2:00 PM
Jews and the Berlin Wall
Forchheimer Auditorium, Center for Jewish History
This panel discussion on the impact of the division of Germany on Jewish communities on both sides of the Berlin Wall will be moderated by Jeffrey Peck, author of Being Jewish in the New Germany and Dean of the Weissman School at Baruch College.

LECTURE
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2014, 6:30 PM
The German Federal Justice Ministry and the Nazi Past
Forchheimer Auditorium, Center for Jewish History
German Federal Justice Minister Heiko Maas will discuss the research of an independent commission of historians appointed to investigate how the German Federal Justice Ministry dealt with the Nazi past in the early post-war period.

BOOK PRESENTATION
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2014, 6:30 PM
From the Shtetl to the Lecture Hall: Jewish Women and Cultural Exchange
Kovno Room, Center for Jewish History
Luise Hirsch uses biography and social history to show how Russian- and German-Jewish women fought their way into the universities of Switzerland and Germany and became the first women professionals in modern history.

Berlin Events

GUIDED TOUR, LUNCH, AND CONCERT
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2014, 12:00 PM
Mendelssohn Remise
Jägerstrasse 51, Berlin
Join LBI for a guided tour and lunch at the former home of the Mendelssohn Bank in Berlin with Thomas Lackmann, an expert on the Mendelssohn family’s history. The museum-like Remise houses an exhibit on the history of the banking family. The program will include a short concert to celebrate the 285TH birthday of Moses Mendelssohn the next day, September 6.

GUIDED TOUR
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2014, 2:00 PM
The Reichstag Underground
The Reichstag Building, Berlin
Designed to give members of the German Parliament (Bundestag) easy access to the Reichstag Building, the underground passage from the Parliament Office Building to the Reichstag Building is not open to the public. Danny Freymark, a member of the Berlin State Parliament (Landtag) has arranged a special tour for LBI members to view the works of art and historical exhibits on display there.
Student-playwrights Meet Theresienstadt survivor at LBI

Aliza Schulman

April 4, 2014—The students from Columbia Grammar and Preparatory School quietly filed into the Center for Jewish History’s Lillian Goldman Reading Room past tables full of artifacts from the Theresienstadt Ghetto. Identification cards, meal tickets, a map, Ghetto currency, deportation orders, and other items from the LBI Archives testified to extreme hardship but also rare, fleeting glimmers of hope—a Ketubah in plain Hebrew script documents a marriage that was celebrated in the Ghetto in 1943.

These students, upper middle schoolers through high school seniors, came to do research for an upcoming documentary theater project on Theresienstadt, but the faded documents on the tables were not the main attraction. Miriam Merzbacher, a Berlin native who was interned in Hitler’s “model ghetto” from September 1944 until the end of the war, had agreed to speak with them about her experiences.

Merzbacher fled Germany for the Netherlands with her family in 1937, but they were interned in the Westerbork transit camp after the German invasion. She was 17 years old when she and her parents were deported from Westerbork to the Theresienstadt Ghetto in September of 1944. Her father was later deported to Auschwitz and died, while her brother was murdered at Mauthausen in October 1941. Merzbacher and her mother survived and later came to New York, where her mother became an archivist at Leo Baeck Institute.

While the experience of meeting a survivor was new to many of the students, they were already well-versed in Holocaust history. In a recent unit on Theresienstadt, they had read works about the lives of children in the ghetto, including The Girls of Room 28 by Hannelore Brenner and Paul Wilson’s We Are Children Just the Same: Vedem, the Secret Magazine by the Boys of Terezín.

“The students have been making connections on their own, but hearing from someone who lived through this makes the connections stronger,” said theater teacher Sarah Cusick. She helped them write and stage a play based on the lives of actual individuals who lived in Theresienstadt.

Thanks to their research, the students had insightful questions about Merzbacher’s time in Theresienstadt and its effect on her faith and identity as a Jew. She explained that, to the dismay of her father, at one point in her youth she had wanted to convert to Christianity. However, after the war, a chance meeting with an Israeli soldier in Holland who greeted her with the word “Shalom” changed that. Her only wish now was that her father could have witnessed that moment. She said she misses her father constantly and wishes that he could see her living and identifying as a Jew.

Merzbacher also described one of her jobs in Theresienstadt, discarding the ashes of deceased prisoners into the Eger River. In her words: “It was an unforgettable experience, being told to rush and at the same time holding the ashes of my grandmother’s brother. I felt ageless.” Ian Phelan, an actor and head-editor of the script, said he planned to incorporate a scene into the play based on the dumping of the urns.

Phelan added that Merzbacher’s account of feeling “ageless” also left an impression on him. “We have heard this idea from our research before, the idea that no one in Theresienstadt understood what age they were,” said Phelan.

According to Cusick, Merzbacher’s testimony resonated with the students especially because in the context of her narrative, she was their peer. “This opportunity to speak to someone who survived Theresienstadt as a teenager is invaluable to my students,” said Cusick.
Summer 2014

SAVE THE DATE:
Wednesday, December 3, 2014
FOR THE:
Leo Baeck Institute
Annual Award Dinner
AND
Memorial Lecture
HONORING
Josef Joffe
AT THE
Center for Jewish History

Join us when Dr. Henry A. Kissinger presents the Leo Baeck Medal to Dr. Josef Joffe, who will also deliver the 57TH Annual Leo Baeck Memorial Lecture during LBI’s Annual Award Dinner at the Center for Jewish History in New York City. Josef Joffe is the editor of Germany’s largest weekly newspaper, Die Zeit. Having taught at Johns Hopkins University and the University of Munich, he now teaches political science at Stanford University, where he is also Distinguished Fellow at the Freeman-Spogli Institute for International Studies as well as the Marc and Anita Abramowitz Fellow at the Hoover Institution. He chairs the board of the Abraham Geiger College, the first rabbinical seminary in Germany since 1942.