

***Catalog of the Gerald K. Stone Collection of Judaica: A Bibliographical Resource for Canadian Jewish Studies* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2020), 864 pp., ISBN 9781644694749**

Published last December, the *Catalog of the Gerald K. Stone Collection of Judaica: A Bibliographical Resource for Canadian Jewish Studies* embodies Walter Benjamin's concern, when he gave the world some insight into the relationship of a book collector to a collection: that the collector's passion borders on the chaos of memories.

In conjunction with having won the AJL annual Bibliography Aware in 2021, Stone, the son of Hungarian Holocaust survivors, remarked that in a career spanning 35 years as a librarian, the act of collecting became a trajectory towards self-discovery. After having received his MLS from McGill, he joined the National Archives of Canada in 1983 and over the next twenty-five years, provided expertise and leadership in improving access to archival and published material through resource description standards, systems and networks. Initially, his interest in collecting came from the regular meetings he attended at the Ottawa Book Collectors group. Over the course of his career, he collected well over 2000 items which he later donated to the University of Ottawa's Vered Jewish Canadian Studies Department. As Director of Planning and Research of Library and Archives Canada's Documentary Heritage Collection Sector, he retired in 2009.

Stone is not just a collector of books, but a collector and organizer of a genre in which books, printed ephemera, digital files, and artifacts are mapped according to a nostalgic practice: a controlled vocabulary, something librarians used to learn before anarchic keyword searching and the inevitable concomitant filters required to tame it. Using library and archival resource description standards in concert with the classification system developed by Daniel Elazar (*A classification system for libraries of Judaica*), Stone's catalogue describes over 3000 items—in both print and digital form, the latter affirming the importance of tracing the most ephemeral of ephemera whose existence is marked by time and only virtual space.

This is where Stone differs from his predecessors. A long lineage of collectors dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Ephraim Hart, Sigmund Samuel, Lawrence Lande, Nathan Arkin, J. J. Zlotnick, and of course, Jacob Lowy whose famous collection of Hebraica established the Lowy Collection at Library & Archives Canada in 1977) represent the progenitors of Jewish Canadian collections. As Richard Menkis points out in his introduction, collecting printed material situates the cultural and religious history of the Jews in Canada within fixed disciplinary boundaries. Stone is able to extend these parameters beyond the standard disciplines and subdisciplines to include digital media in his catalogue, something his predecessors were obviously in no position

to do. A URL that points the user to a digital file is itself ephemeral; capturing it as part of a catalogue and assigning characteristics unique to that material (duration, bytes, etc.) reifies both the source and the referent, ironically introducing a quality of permanence on the ephemerality of the resource.

For Stone, the criteria for Jewish Canadiana include books (and other materials) by and about the Jewish Canadian experience or, produced by Jewish Canadians. In the last 50 years, there has been significant interest in Canadian Jews and Jewry from outside the country and perhaps for this reason, Stone did not insist that material published from within Canada be part of his criteria. This is perhaps one of the most important aspects of the catalogue: in determining how Canadian Jewish studies have been approached historically, including sources from beyond the Canadian cultural and scholarly milieu is important.

Canadian Jewish Studies as a distinct discipline likely began after Aaron Hart, his family, and other Jews settled in this country. Organizing and classifying the recorded evidence of 250 years of a genre which is still unfolding is a monumental feat. One should be aware, however, that Stone makes it clear that this is a catalog and not a bibliography. The fact that this book represents one person's collection is a testament to the importance of collecting as an activity that limns the chaos of memories and plants a marker in the ground to remember those memories that are vulnerable to being forgotten. Stone's catalogue will be invaluable to researchers in the field and joins bibliographical works—such as David Rome's *A selected bibliography of Jewish Canadiana* (1959), as a portal into the growing body of scholarly work on Jews and Judaism in Canada.

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