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### Association of Jewish Libraries Reference Book Award, 1991 Recipients: Gary Mokotoff, Sallyann Amdur Sack

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## Association of Jewish Libraries Reference Book Award, 1991\*

***Where Once We Walked: A Guide to the Jewish Communities Destroyed in the Holocaust*, by Gary Mokotoff and Sallyann Amdur Sack. Teaneck, New Jersey: Avotaynu (P.O. Box 1134, 07666), 1991.**

Presentation by:  
**Ann Masnik**  
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The 1991 Association of Jewish Libraries Reference Book Award is sponsored this year by the Eugene Garfield Foundation. *Where Once We Walked*, by Gary Mokotoff and Sallyann Amdur Sack, is this year's winner. This very unusual reference book is a comprehensive gazetteer of Europe and can be considered a definitive gazetteer for Central and Eastern Europe. It contains over 150,000 pieces of information, including pre-World War I town names, as well as interwar and current names. It has an excellent introduction, which will help the user find current names where towns still exist. Where one has only the Yiddish name, or, as in most cases, when the town no longer exists, the location by historical name is given.

Included are more than 22,000 towns. Because place names changed, spellings differ, and there are many name duplications, identification of a town is extremely difficult. "Identity problems are compounded by the human and archival destruction of the Holocaust" (p. xi). Gary Mokotoff has developed a unique soundex system to further assist in locating towns.

You might think that this tool is suited only to the specialized researcher or genealogist, but anyone wanting to do personal research in this field will find the book of enormous help. The authors themselves started to do genealogical research out of personal interest, and became so interested in the field that they wrote this book!

In addition to the previously mentioned introduction, the book includes a section on "what to do if you were told that your family came from Gubernya, which sim-

ply means province—, or the region of Vilna." There is also a list of references, including organizations to contact. According to the introduction (p. xv), "The complete list of towns is available on microfiche from Avotaynu," implying that the book is selective.

Many librarians and other researchers helped bring this invaluable work to completion. Yizkor (memorial) books were used, and research even took place in the former Soviet Union. However, were it not for the assistance of the Library of Congress, the work probably would not have come to fruition. This is why it is appropriate that, since neither author could receive the award personally, Peggy Pearlstein, Hebraic Specialist at the Library of Congress, is accepting the award on their behalf.

To the authors, the book's title, *Where Once We Walked*, has a double meaning. To some it may merely refer to the towns of our ancestors. To the authors, it signifies that, "if not for the Holocaust, this gazetteer would not have been necessary." *Where Once We Walked* is not only deserving of the Association of Jewish Libraries annual Reference Book Award, but is a major contribution to our Judaica reference collections.

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*Ann Masnik is Public Service Librarian in the undergraduate library of the University of Maryland at College Park. She served on the Reference Awards Committee of AJL for two years and is active in her local AJL chapter.*

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*\*Presented at the Banquet of the 27th Annual Convention of the Association of Jewish Libraries, Los Angeles, June 1992.*

## Association of Jewish Libraries Bibliography Award, 1991\*

The winner of the Association of Jewish Libraries Bibliography Award for 1991 is *Jewish American Fiction Writers: An Annotated Bibliography*, by Gloria L. Cronin, Blaine H. Hall, and Connie Lamb; published by Garland, New York, 1991.

This bibliography lists the works of sixty-two Jewish American authors of fiction as well as secondary literature about them. Included are such well-known authors as Charles Angoff, Sholem Asch, Howard Fast, Herbert Gold, Ben Hecht, Meyer Levin, Cynthia Ozick, Chaim Potok, Lionel Trilling, and Herman Wouk, as well as many lesser-known writers. The scope and size (1233 p.) of the bibliography are impressive, and the annotations give ample evidence of the thoroughness and care of the compilers.

This work fills an important gap in that it provides bibliographical coverage for a whole body of authors never before covered; it should prove very useful for students of American literature in general and the Jewish component of that literature in particular.

The Association's Bibliography Award, sponsored by Louis and Marcia Posner, is presented at its Annual Convention to the Judaica bibliography deemed most worthy that was published in the previous calendar year.

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*\*Editor's Note: The text of the presentation speech and acceptance remarks made at AJL's 27th Annual Convention in Los Angeles (June 1992) were not received for publication. This is an edited version of the press release that was sent out by AJL.*

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*\*Award presented at the Banquet of the 28th Annual Convention of the Association of Jewish Libraries, June 22, 1993, held at the New York Hilton Hotel.*