

Elizabeth Shub:

An Inventory of Her Collection of Isaac Bashevis Singer Papers at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Shub, Elizabeth
Title:	Elizabeth Shub Collection of Isaac Bashevis Singer Papers
Dates:	1967-1985, nd
Extent:	3 boxes, 1 galley file (1.26 linear feet)
Abstract:	Editor and translator Elizabeth Shub worked with Yiddish writer Isaac Bashevis Singer to translate his works into English. Manuscripts in the Shub papers include the translator's working drafts for two novels, several children's stories, some short stories, and one essay by Singer.
Call Number:	Manuscript Collection MS-04963
RLIN Record #:	TXRC04-A3
Language:	English and Yiddish
Access:	Open for research

Administrative Information

Acquisition:	Purchase, 1996 (R13554)
Processed by:	Katherine Mosley, 2004
Repository:	Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Biographical Sketch

Editor and translator Elizabeth “Libby” Shub was born in Vilno, Poland, the daughter of Samuel and Bessie Charney. In 1919, her family moved to the United States, where they settled in New York and her father, writing as Shmuel Niger, worked as a literary critic for the Yiddish newspaper *The Day*. Because her parents ran a literary salon in their home, Shub was exposed to Yiddish literature and writers from an early age. She met author Isaac Bashevis Singer when her father invited him to dinner at their house soon after Singer’s arrival in the United States in 1935, and they developed a lasting friendship.

In 1965, after her marriage to Boris Shub ended in divorce, Elizabeth Shub began working as a reader in the children’s department at Harper & Row Publishers and soon became an associate editor there. She later worked at Charles Scribner’s Sons (1966-68) and Macmillan Publishing Company (1968-75), also as an associate editor of children’s books. She became senior editor at Greenwillow Books in 1975 and retired from that position in 1996.

It was Shub who suggested to Singer that he write a children’s book. He agreed to write one if she would translate it from Yiddish to English; the result was *Zlateh the Goat and Other Stories* (1966), which won a Newbery Honor Book award, as did another collaboration, *When Shlemiel Went to Warsaw and Other Stories* (1968). Although she is known primarily as a translator of Singer’s stories for children, Shub also translated some of his short stories for adults, as well as his novels *The Estate* (1970) and *Enemies: A Love Story* (1972). In addition to works by Singer, Shub translated other folk tales and children’s stories. Her translations of Theodor Fontane’s *Sir Ribbeck of Ribbeck of Havelland* and *About Wise Men and Simpletons: Twelve Tales from Grimm* won American Library Association Notable Book awards in 1969 and 1971. Shub also wrote several original books for children, including *The White Stallion* (1982). She died in New York City on June 18, 2004, at the age of 89.

Scope and Contents

Yiddish writer Isaac Bashevis Singer worked closely with his translators, particularly with Elizabeth Shub, who could read Yiddish, unlike many of his other translators.

Manuscripts in the Shub papers include the translator’s working drafts of Singer’s novels *The Estate* and *Enemies: A Love Story*, which Shub also edited, as well as his children’s stories *Alone in the Wild Forest*, *Elijah the Slave*, *The Fools of Chelm and Their History*, *The Topsy-Turvy Emperor of China*, *Why Noah Chose the Dove*, and *The Wicked City*. Two of Singer’s short stories for adults, "A Friend of Kafka" and "Powers," are also present, as are a collection of short stories, *The Image and Other Stories*, and an essay on Hasidism.

Most of the manuscripts are typescripts with handwritten corrections by both Shub and Singer, showing the collaborative nature of the translations. "Alone in the Wild Forest" is also represented by corrected Yiddish galley proofs and clippings from its serialization in the *Jewish Daily Forward*. *The Image and Other Stories* is present only as a corrected typesetting copy. Dorothea Straus's translation of "Powers" was published in *Harper's Magazine*, and tearsheets from that periodical have handwritten revisions by Shub.

Related Material

Additional Shub-Singer materials are housed in the Center's Isaac Bashevis Singer archive.

Index Terms

People

Singer, Isaac Bashevis, 1904- . Translations into English.

Subjects

Children's stories--Yiddish.

Jewish literature.

Yiddish literature.

<i>Alone in the Wild Forest</i> (1971)	Box 1 Folder
Corrected Yiddish galley proofs, [1968] (*housed in galley files)	Folder *
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Composite original and photocopy typescript fragment with revisions by Singer and Shub and handwritten insert pages by Shub, nd. With typing invoice from Jacquelyne Paltis, 31 Oct. 1971	Folder 8-9
Typescript with revisions and notes by Shub, nd	Box 2 Folder 1-2
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- Typescript with revisions by Shub, nd **Folder**
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- Typescript, two copies, one with revisions by Shub, nd **Folder 14**

Typescript with revisions by Shub, nd

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The Wicked City (1972), typescript with revisions by Shub, titled "Abraham and Lot,"
nd. With typing invoice from Jacquelyne Paltis, 24 Nov. 1969

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