HISTORY, MEMORY, IDENTITY: THE KAHN COLLECTION

Nancy Kahn recently donated 79 Hebrew and German books to the Eugene McDermott Library at UT Dallas. The collection is named for her parents, Renate and Karl Kahn (above), whose immediate families fled the Upper-Hessen region of Germany before the start of the Second World War. The books were among the few possessions the family brought with them when immigrating to the U.S.

The books span from 1500 – 1971 and reflect the changing religious and cultural orientation of the family. As a whole, the collection provides a unique opportunity to illuminate the history of German Jewry from the eighteenth century to the Holocaust.

(continued on page 2)
Among the oldest of the books is Biblica Hebraica (1705) (right), a Hebrew bible containing handwritten annotations throughout the text, including a full page of notes jotted on the inside cover. The annotations along with other Hebrew prayer books from the end of the eighteenth-century portrays a family immersed in traditional religious studies.

From the twentieth century is the Ausführliches Kochbuch für die einfache und feine jüdische Küche (1921), (A Detailed Cookbook for Fine and Simple Jewish Cuisine). The compilation of the recipes exemplifies the desire to reinvigorate Jewish culture during the Weimar Republic.

The last publication added to the collection is a two-volume series titled Die Judenverfolgung in Mannheim 1933-1945 (The Persecution of the Jews in Mannheim), chronicling the persecution of the Jews during the Holocaust.

Renate and Karl Kahn settled in Dallas, Texas in the 1940s. The books were posthumously bequeathed to their daughter, Nancy, who entrusted them to the library in 2016. The Ackerman Center plans to curate an exhibit of the Kahn Collection with the help of library’s Special Collections department where the books are housed.