This presentation will be in two part – the first is cataloging Esther Scrolls and the second will be on cataloging posters
Perhaps you have been in this situation. You get a job where your boss has an amazing amount of institutional information in her head; none of which is written down. When I first moved to the Los Angeles campus of HUC, I found a handful of scrolls, megiloth Ester, lying around in the director’s office and in the rare book area. They were not in the catalog, but if a student needed one for their student pulpit or a local area havurah needed one, Yaffa would know exactly where they were and hand one over for them to use.
I investigated cataloging them and spoke with our rare book librarian at the time, Dan Rettberg, of blessed memory. He told me that I was not qualified to catalog scrolls since I could not identify the type of parchment or gather clues from the hand-writing about the provenance. Which was sadly true. And this remained true this past year when I became director of the library. But, I decided that doing a poor job was better than doing no job at all.

Here are a couple of examples of our scrolls – you can see the difference in the conditions of the parchment and the ink.
Here is a close up of the hand-writing. I picked out the name Achashverosh so that you can see differences in the shape of the letters, their spacing, and the “tagin” the crowns or flourishes on them. An expert would be able to look at these examples and say “aha it is from this century at this place.” Alas, as I mentioned, I am not that expert.
So what can I do ...?
I consulted with our new(ish) rare book librarian, Jordan Finkin, and he walked me through the basics. To start at the beginning in the leader, I can identify this as a manuscript; and a monograph
I can indicate that I don’t know when it was produced
Or where …
There are two aspects to the cataloging of manuscripts; one is for the content and other for artifact and we need to bring out the attributes of both. The content of these manuscripts is obviously the text of the Biblical book of Esther. According to the RDA instructions, we would construct the preferred access by first, the authorized access point representing the work – in this case, Bible $p Esther - then, the term Manuscript. This is followed by a brief form of the name of a particular owner if that is how the manuscript is identified (Frances-Henry Library) or any other name by which the manuscript is identified, or a brief form of the name of the repository followed by the repository’s designation. This treatment focuses on the artifact aspect of the scroll. After looking at many examples in OCLC, it seems that this approach is used more for illuminated manuscripts for those with unique physical characteristics.
Another approach is to focus on the content or text of the rather than the physical item. I found many more examples of manuscripts with this type of heading. You start, of course with the authorized access (Bible Esther) with $l$ language, $s$ version, designated by the owner, $k$ to show the format of manuscript, $f$ with the date when it is known, and $n$ to show the shelf mark.

Since there is no proper title, I made one up and added a note to indicate that.
Since I do not know a place or date for this manuscript, all I can do is indicate that I don’t know it.
The RDA 330 notes show that this is a text, unmediated and that the physical carrier is a roll.
We include a 546 language note and then 500 notes which would typically include:
• a description of the object (manuscript, written on parchment in ink);
• where it is stored: the shelfmark
• the note I mentioned earlier about the devised title
• *and a description of the content, the columns, lines per column, and variations. There was often a variation in the column containing Haman’s sons’ names.
• when needed, you should add a note about the condition of the object; in this case the parchment is torn

* During the question period, a cataloger pointed out that the physical description should be put in a 340 field: $a material base; $c material applied to surface; $k layout. 340 _ _ $a Parchment $c ink $k 11 text columns, 42 lines per column; the column referring to Haman’s sons contains 11 lines of larger text.
I included a subject heading indicating that this is manuscript held in Los Angeles.
While we could of course assign a BS number, the practice at HUC is to assign a manuscript number. Usually they would be assigned in the order the manuscript was acquired, but in my case, it was in the order I cataloged them.

So when you have very few clues about how to catalog a Hebrew manuscript or about the provenance of the item, this is about as far as you can go.
I looked through some of full cataloging done on our Cincinnati campus for some of our illuminated scrolls to show you the types of notes which would ideally be added.

As you can see there is a note about the time period of the scroll based on the parchment’s condition; a comment about the preparation of the parchment, the provenance, and the catalogers.

OCLC Number: 959339688
In this example, the cataloger was able to place the scroll in Italy around 1800. Again there is a provenance note, and a description of the decorative elements.

OCLC 1015678778 Scroll VIII2b
Another example of identifying the age of the text and of the illustrations, which in this case were done at different time periods

1015673646  Scroll VII(6)
And since I have you as a captive audience, I will throw in a shameless plug for our new manuscript site, mss.hcu.edu, where you can see our illuminated Esther Scrolls as well as many other treasures in the HUC collection.
And Now for Something Completely Different
My next challenge was to tackle a pile of posters, broadsides, and artwork which had similarly been laying around. I sorted through it to determine which were appropriate to the collection on the Los Angeles campus. I decided that I only wanted to retain posters of local events or places. The rest I sent to our Cincinnati campus for sorting and processing. Although I’m sure many of you caught that there is one glaring exception to that rule.
To MARC or not to MARC? This is a valid and important question ... and I ignored it. There might be other more appropriate ways of cataloging these materials. I’ve seen some beautiful searchable websites of broadside collections, but MARC was the tool I had.
Cataloging these posters was a really interesting exercise for me. The parts I thought would be tricky were simple and the parts I thought I knew how to do were challenging.

So we’ll start at the beginning again, in the Leader for the type of record, we choose “k” for two-dimensional non-projectable graphic.
The 008 is fairly straightforward as well. Most had a simple, single date and a reasonable guess at the place of publication. >>>
Continuing in the 008 section, the type of material code is “i” for picture, which includes posters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TMat</th>
<th>i</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>245</td>
<td>0 0 It will be a great day when our schools get all the money they need and the air force has to hold a bake sale to buy a bomber.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>1 poster: #b color; #c 57 x 43 cm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>336</td>
<td>still image #b sti #2 rdacontent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>337</td>
<td>unmediated #b n #2 rdaMEDIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>338</td>
<td>sheet #b nb #2 rdaCARRIER</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the 007 fields, we get more specific about the type of picture this is. In this case, “k” for poster.

There are also choices for color: “a” for monochrome (unless it is black), “b” for black and white (and gray scale), “c” for multicolored. There are a few other options that are not relevant to these posters.
In the 300 description field, we have 1 poster, with illustration, and the size.

In the RDA 330 fields ; we have an still image, unmediated, in the form of a sheet.
Now we get to the fun part – what is the title? Across the top of the page it says “Evening of Israeli Song & Dance” but the words on the left side are much more prominent so I decided on the title >>> Habonim neshef : evening of Israeli song & dance

And for the publication information I made a lot of assumptions. >>> I assume that because this is advertising an event in Los Angeles, that the poster was published in Los Angeles, that because Habonim was apparently sponsoring the party, that they were responsible for producing the poster, and that since the party was in 1974 that the poster was printed in that year.
For the notes, I added a 520 contents note with a description of the image and an additional 500 with some of the text. I could not find guidance on how much I needed to transcribe.
I also added a subject heading for dancing with a form subdivision of Posters.
In this next example, I again had to choose the title. “1980 Walk Festival” was in a larger font, but I decided to start with the left-most text. I made similar assumptions as the last one as to the place, responsible party, and date. This was one of my favorite posters. I’ll show you a close-up of illustration >>>
I added the 520 contents note: Poster has text on the top portion and an illustration below showing many happy people, aliens, and animals enjoying the park under the Israeli flag, smiling clouds, and sun. >>>
I think this was the only poster which explicitly stated who designed it; the very talented Joshua Dov, age 8 at the time.
Cataloging these posters, sometimes involved a little detective work. On this Chabad poster, they give the candle (first night), the day of the week (Tuesday), and the date (December 2), but no year. I went to one of Steve Morse’s calendar calculators and put in “when did December 2 fall on Tuesday and come between Kislev 24 and 25. According to this source, it would be 1980.
In this next example, I’m again missing a date – but this was easy math. 1948 + 30 = 1978
No place is given – but I know the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion is in Los Angeles and the area code on the phone number confirms it.
And since the American Committee to Celebrate Israel’s 30th Anniversary is sponsoring the event, again I’ll assume that they are responsible for the poster.
Looking at the guest list, it looks like it was an amazing evening.
And here we have another mystery date. There are several years in which June 16 falls on a Sunday. They include 1968, 1974, and 1985. Because of the colors and the feel of the graphic, I suspect it is 1974, but since I really don’t know, I put the range of 1968-1985.
So this was the report of my latest cleaning and organizing projects. I have often struggled with being paralyzed by not being able to do a task perfectly. I hope that presentation will convince the like-minded folks out there that doing something, even if you know it is not perfect, is better than doing nothing.

Thanks