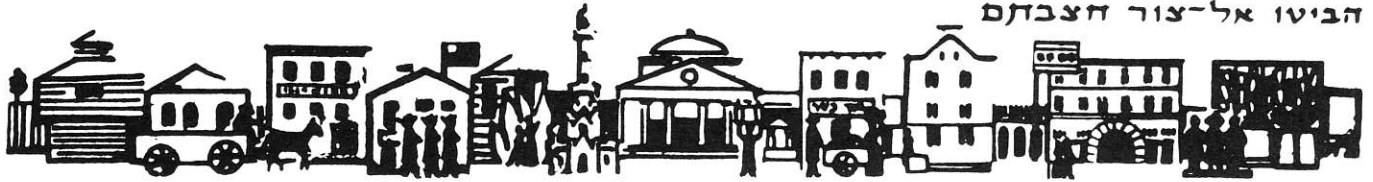


Look to the rock from which you were born  
הביטו אל-צור חצבתם



chicago jewish historical society

618 South Michigan • Chicago, Illinois 60605 • Telephone: (312) 663-5634

# society news

VOLUME IX, NUMBER 3

MARCH, 1986

## OPEN MEETING

March 30, 1986

Sunday Afternoon

## PROGRAM

CHICAGO JEWRY IN THE MAINSTREAM

A Story of Forty Years of Progress

A. ABBOT ROSEN

Midwest Director Emeritus  
Anti-Defamation League, B'nai B'rith

BEDERMAN HALL

SPERTUS COLLEGE OF JUDAICA

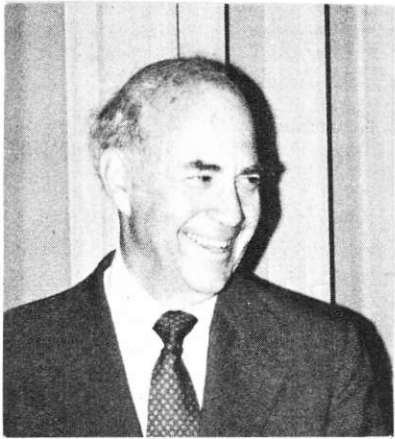
618 South Michigan Avenue

FREE ADMISSION

1 PM: Refreshments, Social Hour

2 PM: Program

See Page Three for Details



President  
Schwartz

### President's Message

## Ask the President Proves To Be a Popular Pastime

Being president of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society offers me opportunities for contact with many individuals and organizations both within and outside our own community. People turn to the Chicago Jewish Historical Society for programs and for information about Chicago Jewish history. Sometimes the request is about an event; sometimes it is about an individual who was prominent in Chicago. Often it is about a relative who lived in Chicago.

The sources of the questions are not always local. We have received calls and letters from all over the country. We answered a question from the Magnes Memorial Museum in Berkeley, California, about an obscure Jewish Chicago poet. At its request, our Society News publicized the search for material for the centennial of Congregation Beth-El of Traverse City, Michigan, where many Chicago Jews have spent summer vacations.

Recently, some information for a researcher was needed about Golda Meir's stay in Chicago, and we were able to suggest several sources. One of the oral histories we took was used by a person writing a history of the Hebrew Theological College. A student called about the ethnic distribution of the Chicago Jewish population and we were able to provide her with a bibliography.

I relay this information to you for the following reasons:

1. to indicate that the Chicago Jewish Historical Society is a rich source of information on Chicago Jewish history.
2. to show that we are achieving nation-

## CONTINUE WORK ON INVENTORY OF TOMBS AT CITY'S OLDEST JEWISH CEMETERY

Work continues on an inventory of persons buried in Jewish Graceland, the oldest existing Jewish cemetery in the City of Chicago. When completed, the name on each tombstone, some of them dated in the 1860's, will be included in a computerized index arranged by surnames.

Volunteers to assist with the work at the cemetery site at 3919 Clark Street are being sought by the Jewish Genealogical Society of Illinois, which has undertaken the project. The next work day will be Sunday, April 13, or, in case of rain, June 1. Those interested either in a morning or afternoon stint should contact Cemetery Inventory Co-Chairman Mark Mandle at 929-2853 or JSGI President Judith Frazin at 564-1025.

The resulting inventory will be of particular interest to individuals studying their family backgrounds, especially those whose ancestors were among the earlier Jews to settle in Chicago. When complete the inventory will also be useful to students of local Jewish history and will become a part of the Chicago Jewish Archives.

According to Mr. Mandle, the inventory was begun last October because many records of burials in the rarely used burial ground were lost in the Chicago Fire of 1871 and later in a fire at the cemetery in 1911.

The cemetery contains four sections, each allocated to a different Jewish group.

---

al recognition.

3. to enlist your aid in the collection of material that will expand our ability to be a resource for historians.

4. to thank you for your past backing and to encourage your continued financial support.

5. to ask you to help us by getting your friends to join the Chicago Jewish Historical Society.

I believe the Chicago Jewish Historical Society has an important and meaningful role to fulfill because I believe that the preservation of Chicago Jewish history is important for the future. I am enjoying our society and I hope you are also.

--N. D. Schwartz

## JEWS IN THE MAINSTREAM ARE SUBJECT OF MARCH MEETING

### Veteran ADL Head Will Discuss Achievements Through the Years

"Chicago Jewry in the Mainstream," a story of forty years of progress, will be the focus of the March 30 meeting of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society. The meeting, to be held at Spertus College, will feature an address by A. Abbot Rosen, who for 35 years was the midwest director of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.

"Perhaps no one in this area is better qualified to discuss the subject of Jews in the mainstream than Mr. Rosen," said President Norman Schwartz. "He has not only been monitoring such progress for decades but has also been actively at work making it possible. I think our membership will enjoy both his presentation and the question period and open discussion which will follow."

During his thirty-five years as ADL midwest director, Mr. Rosen has been in the thick of problems arising between Jews and Christians but he has also been tireless in his efforts to promote better understanding between the two groups. He has a national reputation as an expert in this field.

As usual, a social hour with refreshments will begin at 1:00 PM and the meeting will begin at 2:00 PM. The afternoon was arranged by Program Chairman Burt Robin. Refreshments will be supervised by Hospitality Chairman Shirley Sorkin. The meeting is open to the public.

### Society Welcomes New Members

The Society welcomes the following new members who have joined during the past few months. Their membership indicates their desire to assist in the preservation of Chicago's Jewish history and to participate in the many entertaining and educational activities of the organization.

Sanford M. Altschul	Rabbi Norman Lewison
Richard Bitterman	Susan Matt
Mrs. Hannah Gordon	Mrs. Bertha E. Schrage
Norman Grossman	Mr. & Mrs. Bernard Schwartz
Mrs. Robert Haas	Alan Teller
Sylvia F. Halpern	Alex & Klara Tulsky
Nathan Kaplan	Jerry Zbiral
University of Florida Library	



A. Abbot Rosen, who will speak at the March 30 meeting at Spertus College.

### Society Returns Rescued Pew Benches to Original Owners

Four large bench pews from an old Anshe Sholom B'nai Israel Congregation building on Ashland Avenue at Polk Street have been presented to the congregation for use in its present facility on Melrose Avenue near Broadway.

The carved wooden benches, each bearing several name plates memorializing donors, were installed shortly after the turn of the century when Ohave Sholom, as it was then known, built the building which later became the Greek Orthodox Church of St. Basil. They were left behind when the congregation moved to the Douglas Park area and were used for many years by the church, which is still in the same building.

Some years ago when the church no longer needed them, the Society acquired them.

Last year Society News published the names on the brass plates of the benches in an effort to identify the families involved. As a result of this publicity, current leadership at Anshe Sholom requested that the benches be returned to the congregation. Founding President Muriel Robin, who was responsible for the Society's acquisition of the benches, arranged for their return.

## NEWLY-TAPED INTERVIEWS ADD TO ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION

### Society's Programs Also Become Part of Rapidly Growing Resource

One of the Society's hardest working committees is that on Oral History, currently headed by Adele Hast and Sidney Sorkin. Proof of its dedication and zeal is the fact that during the past two years 33 additional names have been added to the list of persons whose recollections of Chicago Jewish history are now preserved on tape.

In addition to these new tapes, each involving an extensive interview, the committee has arranged for the taping of two events of Jewish interest as well as the last seventeen Society meetings. All this has been accomplished since the publication of an earlier list of oral history tapes in 1984.

"Anyone who has been involved in the making of an oral history tape knows how much time is required for preparation and travel in addition to the actual interview time," said CJHS President Norman Schwartz. "We are grateful both to the committee personnel and the individuals interviewed for making substantial contributions to local Jewish history."

#### Additions Since 1984

Persons taped for the oral history collection since the 1984 list was published in Society News are listed below.

William Braiterman	Eva Eller Lapin
Carolyn Brenner	Sam Lesner
Leon Despres	Abraham Lubin
Jennie Dishman	Solomon Matusen
Rabbi Moses Eichenstein	Abner Mikva
Richard Elrod	Judge A.L. Marovitz
Elmer Gertz	Rosaline Morrison
Lillian Gethner	Martha Newman
Rabbi David Graubart	A.N. Pritzker
Dr. David Heller	Herbert T. Schaffner
Max Janowski	Bella Schmid
Sarah Kahan	Walter Schwerin
Ben & Blanche Kallis	Oscar Shabbat
Phillip Klutznick	Rabbi Mark Shapiro
Marshal Korshak	Dr. Irwin Suloway
Irv Kupcinet	Diane Weiner
	Maynard Wishner

Tapes were also made at the fifty-year reunion of Marks Nathan Orphan Home alumni and of the Tuley High School

### Test Your Knowledge with The Chicago Jewish Trivia Quiz

#### Trivia Quiz Number 2

Test your knowledge of local Jewish history by attempting to answer our Chicago Jewish Trivia Quiz. Then check with your friends to see how well **they** do.

1. Who was the first Jew to become governor of Illinois?
2. Where was Chicago's first Jewish cemetery located?
3. Name at least two of the four Jewish Chicagoans to win Nobel prizes.
4. Who was the only man to have a Chicago synagogue named after him?

#### Answers on page nine

1981 Class reunion. A videotape of a Channel Five television program on the Jewish labor movement has also been secured for the collection.

#### Society Meeting Speakers' Words Preserved

Speakers whose presentations at Society meetings since October, 1982, have been preserved include, in chronological order:

Dr. Stephen J. Whitfield	Lisa Derman
Rabbi Howard Berman	Rabbi Oscar Lifshutz
Dr. Irving Cutler	Marshall Krolick
Alan Teller	Daniel Beederman
Ira Berlin	H. Burton Schatz
Maureen Will	Favil David Berns
Richard Marcus	Edward R. Jordan
Harry Heller	Michael Pekay
Leah Axelrod	Arik Marcell
Dr. Irving Cutler	Noah Marcell
Rachel Heimovics	Norman Schwartz
Charles Bernstein	Ruth Rothstein
Ann Barzel	Arthur Weinberg
Rabbi Ralph Simon	Lila Weinberg
Leah Axelrod	Rabbi Daniel Leifer
Michael Karzen	Nell Pekarsky
Regina Lipman	

Among the tapings currently under way is one of Arthur Goldberg, the formercabinet member, Supreme Court justice and United Nations ambassador, which Sol Brandzel went to Washington, D. C. to secure.

## CJHS Leader Sol Brandzel Chosen To Head American Jewish Congress

Yet another honor has been bestowed on the Society's treasurer, Sol Brandzel, by his recent election as president of the Midwest Division of the American Jewish Congress. He has long been active in affairs of the Congress, one of the country's leading communal organizations.

"The Congress is fortunate to have a leader such as Sol at its head," said CJHS President Norman Schwartz. "We of the historical society are well aware of the leadership he brings to an organization because we have gained immeasurably from his contributions to our group."

Mr. Brandzel is a CJHS founder, a board member, and currently chairman of the nominating committee as well as treasurer. He also has been actively involved in the society's oral history program.

One of the metropolitan area's better known attorneys and a major civic leader, he has served as a member of the Chicago City College Board and the Chicago Board of Education. He recently completed a term as Board of Education president.

## Many Books on Local Jewish History Available at Skokie Public Library

In connection with Jewish Book Month the Skokie Public Library recently compiled a booklist of interest to Chicago Jewish history buffs. The list includes many books dealing with Jews in the Chicago scene and it is quite extensive--probably the most extensive collection in any public library near areas of concentrated Jewish settlement.

While the books were listed under headings which did not include "history" as such, most books dealing with Chicago Jewish history were included. Numerous biographies of local Jews are also on the list as well as other specialized non-fiction which treat their subject historically.

Society members who live near the Skokie Public Library should be aware of this easily available resource. Copies of the list are available without charge from the Readers Advisory Desk of the library at 5215 Oakton Street or by phoning 673-7774, Extension 27.



Society Officer  
Sol Brandzel, New  
AJC President

## Articles To Mark Anniversaries Of Sinai Temple, Anshe Emet School

Future issues of Society News this year will feature articles marking the 125th anniversary of Chicago Sinai Congregation and the fortieth anniversary of the Anshe Emet Day School.

"Both institutions have made important contributions to the local Jewish community, and their histories should be interesting reading for our members," said Society News Editor Irwin J. Suloway. "We try to mark such significant anniversaries so that the record of the past may be preserved."

## Appoint Haron Acting Director Of Chicago Jewish Archives

Dr. Miriam J. Haron, an assistant professor at Spertus College of Judaica, has been appointed acting director of the Chicago Jewish Archives at Spertus.

A historian who recently completed training as an archivist, Dr. Haron will be working on a collection of local Jewish historical materials which have in some part been acquired for the archives through the efforts of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society. The Society will, of course, continue to solicit and receive donations to the archives and to supply volunteer workers. Interested individuals may leave a message through the Society office at 663-5634.

Dr. Haron succeeds the former Asher Library director, Richard Marcus, who also headed the archives before his recent departure from Chicago.

## HOW AN 1884 BIRTHDAY PARTY HELPED UNITE CHICAGO JEWS

### Rare Meites Book Traces Results Of Event Honoring Moses Montefiore

The name Montefiore is best known in Chicago these days as that of a public school. Many older readers remember it as the school to which children with behavior problems were sent.

One hundred years ago it was the name of the most famous Jew of the nineteenth century. Sir Moses Montefiore was known and respected throughout Europe and the United States. He was the first international leader produced by Jewry in hundreds of years. The major philanthropist of his time, spokesman for the Jewish people to the governments of England, Russia, Rumania, Turkey, Egypt and the Vatican, he lived to be 101 years old; and the centenary of his birth was celebrated by Jews throughout the western world.

Chicago Jews were not to be outdone, and their celebration of his 100th birthday was notable not because of the event itself, but because it served to draw together the already diverse parts of the local Jewish community and to produce the city's first free Hebrew school, or Talmud Torah.

#### Story Told in Meites Book

The story of Montefiore and Chicago Jewry is best told in the rare but precious History of the Jews of Chicago by H. L. Meites published in 1924. The account which follows is edited from that source.

One of the first events in Chicago that interested the new West Side Jews as much, if not more than it did the older Jewish population, was the celebration of the hundredth anniversary of the birth of the great Jewish philanthropist, Sir Moses Montefiore. This notable celebration in Chicago's Jewish annals took place on Sunday afternoon, October 24, 1884, the great humanitarian's birthday. It was held at the finest hall in Chicago, the Central Music Hall, a beautiful and spacious structure which had been designed by Dankmar Adler. The celebration was held under the auspices of the Chicago lodges of the B'nai B'rith, then numbering eleven. A full account of the celebration ap-

peared in the Chicago Tribune in its issue of the morning after, containing three columns in small type on the life of Sir Moses Montefiore and another column furnishing details of the Chicago celebration. Philip Stein, chairman of the committee on arrangements, presided.

On the platform, among others were Dr. Leibman Adler, retired rabbi of KAM Congregation and father of Dankmar Adler; Dr. Emil G. Hirsch, rabbi of Sinai Congregation, and gentile civic leaders.

#### Early Use of Jewish Flag

Three flags were draped above the platform stage, two American flags, one at each end, and in the middle the flag of Zion of white and blue, called in the Tribune's account, "the colors of Jerusalem." A large portrait of Sir Moses Montefiore occupied the center of the stage and one of the features of the occasion was the giving to all present of small reproductions of the picture as souvenirs.

Dr. Hirsch's "panegyric" was the chief feature of the celebration with his eulogy on the life of probably the greatest philanthropist who has ever lived. It is interesting to observe that Dr. Hirsch then had none of the anti-Zionistic bias he developed in later years, for in his eulogy of Sir Moses Montefiore he said, "He was a Jew and a patriot at the same time, and though a loyal subject of Queen Victoria, he looked forward to the day when the tribes would be gathered together in Jerusalem."

Professor Swing, one of the most noted liberal religious leaders in Chicago, pronounced Sir Moses Montefiore's life one of "one hundred years of moral beauty," adding, "We Christians might envy you Jews the possession of this great man, if our religion did not forbid us to envy," and gave it as his opinion that "such a man could not be found among the teeming millions who held the Jews in derision."

Other features of the memorable occasion were the reading of an original poem on Sir Moses Montefiore by Miriam Del Banco, the well-known Jewish author, who was then a teacher in the Sabbath school of Zion Congregation (now Oak Park Temple); and the singing by Mrs. Louis Falk of a selection from Costa's oratorio Eli.

### East European Jews Included

Among the spectators in the gallery were some of the more recent Russian arrivals who did not understand a word of the proceedings but came away with impressions they did not soon forget, of how dignified a Jewish celebration could be made. They carried this impression back with them and from that time felt prouder than ever before that they were Jews. It gave them their bearings in Chicago and America.

The Moses Montefiore celebration caused the thought to come to some, of establishing a Talmud Torah that should bear the name of the great humanitarian and that should be worthy of such a name. The lead was taken by Jacob Cohen, then and for many years after, the leading spirit of the Mariampol Shul. Cohen was joined by Dr. A. P. Kadison, Nachum Friedman, Moses Harris, Henoch Goodman, Morris Bergman, Marks Nathan and others, who united their efforts to establish the Moses Montefiore Hebrew Free School.

### West Side Needs New School

The new school was to continue the work of a small older school on larger and more adequate lines. The first school was still being maintained but under great difficulties, complaints of neighbors being added to financial troubles.

An ideal site was finally found on Judd near Clinton streets, opposite the Russische Shul. William H. Kerfoot, the well-known Chicago realtor, owned

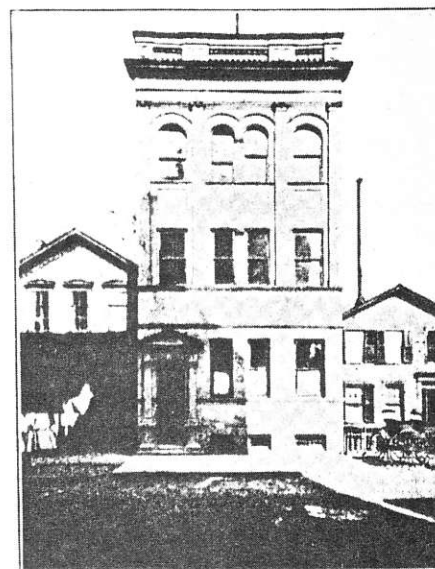
---

### About the Source of This Story

Over sixty years ago an earlier incarnation of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society published a book which is invaluable for those interested in local Jewish history. The book was the History of the Jews of Chicago; the author was H. L. Meites, a local publisher; and the date was 1924.

Sumptuously printed and illustrated, quite complete, and written with style and a generally broad view of the spectrum of Jewish life, the volume stands alone as the authoritative reference about Chicago Jewry during its first seventy-five years. Unfortunately it is also rare and available for consultation only in relatively few libraries.

---



The Montefiore Free Hebrew School  
Photo from Meites

the property, which he was then offering for sale. A committee headed by Jacob Cohen waited on Kerfoot to get the very lowest price at which he was willing to sell the property. When the purpose for which the property was intended was explained to Kerfoot, he expressed a desire to visit the school to see what work it was doing.

### Gentile Tests Students' Hebrew

At the appointed time he appeared and asked if he would be allowed to examine the pupils in Hebrew, explaining that he was familiar with the Hebrew language which he had learned while he was being trained for the ministry.

He then conducted a very creditable examination and even corrected some errors in translation made by the pupils, to the astonishment of all present among whom were Dr. Bernard Felsenthal, retired rabbi of Zion Temple; Henry Greenebaum; and other prominent persons. At the end of the examination, Kerfoot congratulated the pupils he had quizzed and announced he would donate \$1,000 toward the purchase of the building, reducing the price he asked for it from \$3,500, a fair calculation, to \$2,500.

With a view to raising the money necessary to purchase the property, a committee waited upon Dr. Hirsch and Dr. Felsenthal, who issued an appeal on April 12, 1886. With this appeal, Jacob Cohen, who had extensive business dealings with some of the leading business houses in

[continued on next page]

## SOCIETY COMPILES JEWISH DATA FROM FILE OF OLD CITY DIRECTORIES

Researchers into local Jewish history will find their work made easier as a result of a current CJHS project. The project involves microfilming, xeroxing and organizing information of a Jewish nature from an almost complete file of old city directories on file at the Municipal Reference Library.

When the project is completed, the Society will have extensive lists totaling about 350 pages of Jewish synagogues, cemeteries and other organizations for the years 1839 through 1928, when the directories were discontinued. Because continuing institutions are re-listed year after year with addresses, the compilation will be of special value to those who wish to trace an institution through a period of years.

The project was directed by CJHS Board member Clare Greenberg of the Municipal Reference Library staff. Photographing of the rare directories was done by Larry Minsky, the son of Society Vice-President Doris Minsky.

The lists, when organized and arranged by types of institutions, will be available for consultation in the Society office at Spertus College.

## Renew CJHS Membership Now To Preserve Benefits

Members who have not yet paid their dues for 1986 are advised to do so within the next two or three weeks to insure that they retain current membership and thus eligibility to attend the June brunch meeting, to secure lower rates for summer tours, and to continue to receive Society News.

"We have been busy handling renewals," said Membership Chairman Marian Cutler, "but advise those who have not yet sent their check to do so before we update our membership and mailing lists."

Almost all memberships expired at the close of 1985--the exception being those relatively few who joined in the summer or fall of last year. Dues begin at \$15.00 per year with a special rate of \$10.00 for senior citizens and students. A full dues schedule appears on page twelve of this issue.

## Montefiore's Birthday Party

[continued from previous page]

Chicago, made a personal canvass of the business district, which netted a sum sufficient not only to buy and equip the building but also to pay the salaries of the teaching staff for a time.

Lazarus Silverman, the banker, known for his scrupulous orthodoxy (he "laid te-phillin" every morning throughout his life), headed the list with a donation of one hundred dollars. He made his gift conditional upon instruction being given to girls as well as to boys, declaring, "If the Jewish mothers of the future are taught the rudiments of Hebrew and acquainted with the beauties of the Bible, the perpetuation of the Jewish spirit in this country is assured."

### Important Gentiles Contribute

None matched Silverman's gift but a number added their names, among these being Marshall Field, John V. Farwell, Lyman Gage and others not Jewish, who seemingly subscribed to the old Jewish proverb that "the Torah is the best Schnorah."

And thus it was that the Moses Montefiore Hebrew Free School was established in Chicago as a permanent memorial to the noble Jew whose fame resounded all over the world on the occasion of his hundredth birthday anniversary. The school is a monument also not only to the early efforts of the West Side community to afford its children adequate religious training, but also to the fine co-operation between the reformed and orthodox leaders of those days in bringing it into existence.

It was the first time that the organized "West Side" had come to the "South Side" for help and received it. As the years passed, it came again and again, and never was it turned away until there finally grew up a feeling on the West Side that it ought to be able to take care of itself, and it proceeded to demonstrate to itself as well as to others that it could.

--Edited by I.J.S.

---

Membership applications are available from the Society office at 663-5634 as well as at any meeting.





A Maxwell Street scene such as those in the Rogers Park Library Exhibit

Chicago Historical Society Photo

## Answers to Trivia Quiz

### Trivia Questions are on page four

1. The only Chicago Jew to become governor of Illinois was Henry Horner, a long time probate court judge, elected in 1932 and again in 1936. He is generally recognized as being among the state's best leaders. Another Chicago Jew, Samuel Altschuler, was nominated by the Democrats around the turn of the century but did not get elected. A Kankakee Jew, Lieutenant Governor Samuel Shapiro, completed the unexpired term of Otto Kerner in 1968-70.

2. The city's first Jewish cemetery was located near Lake Michigan north of North Avenue in what is now Lincoln Park. The city sold the land to the Jewish Burial Society in 1845. The one-acre cemetery served for about a dozen years before moving to Clark Street at Belmont Avenue, where the ground was drier and tombstones less likely to be washed away by waves.

3. The four local Jewish Nobel laureates are Albert Michaelson for physics (1907); Saul Bellow for literature (1976); Milton Friedman for economics (1976); and Herbert Brown for chemistry (1979).

4. Considered the outstanding Jew of the nineteenth century, Sir Moses Montefiore of England had a Chicago congregation named in his honor some ten years before his death. Moses Montefiore Temple

## SOCIETY ARRANGES MAXWELL STREET EXHIBIT AT ROGERS PARK LIBRARY

The Society has arranged to mount a photo exhibit on Maxwell Street when it was Jewish at the Rogers Park Public library, 6909 North Clark Street. The exhibit will open May 1 and extend throughout the month.

In connection with the exhibit, Dr. Irving Cutler, a Society founder and expert on Chicago Jewish history, will give a related slide presentation in the library on May 21 at 7:00 PM.

### Old Photos Enlarged, Explained

Included in the display are enlarged reproductions of old photographs showing the Maxwell Street area as a locale for Jewish residence as well as business during the fifty or more years beginning around 1880. Informative captions are attached to the photos.

The exhibit, originally displayed at the Chicago Historical Society, was organized by Guest Curator Alan Teller mostly from prints in the collection of the Chicago Historical Society. Reproductions used in the original exhibit are on long-term loan to the Jewish Historical Society, which through its exhibits chairmen, Doris Minsky and Mark Mandle, can make them available to interested groups and organizations.

### Exhibit Available for Use Elsewhere

The original photos are property of the Chicago Historical Society and any inquiries about them should be addressed to that organization's print and photograph department. Organizations wishing to display the exhibit itself should contact the CJHS office at 663-5634.

---

was founded in 1875 and was located on Damen Avenue and Thomas Streets for many years before changing its name to Ohaveh Sholem. At least two other synagogues in Illinois as well as several others throughout the world were named after Montefiore.

Readers are welcome to submit local Jewish Trivia questions to the editor. Credit will be given for all that are used.

(Prepared by Norman Schwartz and Irwin Suloway)

## WORK OF HILLEL FOUNDATION EXPLORED AT JANUARY MEETING

### Appreciative Audience Hears Rabbi Leifer, Nell Pekarsky at Spertus

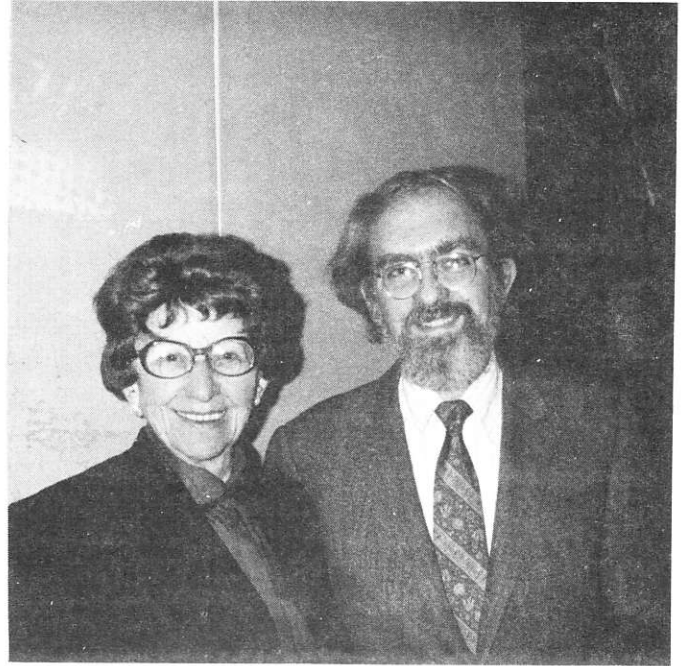
Those who braved the elements on Superbowl Sunday, January 26, to attend the Society's winter meeting at Spertus College were well-rewarded with a program as interesting and vital as the two individuals who presented it. The day's speakers were Nell Pekarsky and Rabbi Daniel Leifer; the subject was serving Jewish college students through area Hillel foundations.

Mrs. Pekarsky, widow of the longtime University of Chicago Hillel foundation director Rabbi Maurice Pekarsky, spoke of the origins of the Hillel idea at the University of Illinois as well as her husband's and her own Hillel experiences. She spoke of the efforts of Champaign-Urbana Jews and their rabbi, Benjamin Frankel, to serve Jewish students there in the early years of the century and of their eventual approach to Dr. Louis Mann of Chicago Sinai Congregation in an effort to secure funding. His and their efforts resulted in B'nai B'rith assuming sponsorship in the nineteen twenties, which led to chapters being established at the state universities of Wisconsin, Ohio and Michigan before the Northwestern chapter was founded in 1933.

#### Early Northwestern University Experiences

Mrs. Pekarsky told of how a reception for her husband upon his arrival in Evanston brought the previously unorganized Jewish families of the town together for the first time and helped to establish the Jewish community there. She also recounted his early contact there with Jewish fraternities and sororities so assimilationist in attitude that they had Christmas trees each year. Yet his years there were marked by increasing Jewish identification and activities. He assumed the directorship at Chicago in 1944, at first in addition to his Northwestern work.

After meeting in the basement of Rockefeller Chapel at Chicago, the Hillel group acquired a home donated in memory of a Jewish soldier killed in World War II.



Nell Pekarsky and Rabbi Daniel Leifer, speakers at January's Meeting Photo by Moselle Schwartz

#### Variety of Students at Chicago

Mrs. Pekarsky discussed the spectrum of Jewish students at the university, ranging from those completely involved to those who wouldn't be caught dead at Hillel. She also praised the depth of Jewish faculty involvement, referring to the now legendary annual mock-debates by professors on the virtues of the latke versus the hamentaschen.

Her presentation made it clear to her audience, though she never mentioned it, how lucky the students were to have had not only her husband but also his wife at Hillel.

#### Rabbi Leifer's Observations

Rabbi Leifer, speaking from his vantage point as present and past (for twenty years) Hillel director at the University of Chicago, concentrated upon the changes at Hillel during the past two decades. He stressed the diversity and pluralism now found at chapters in general and at Chicago in particular. He said that today his chapter would be likely to have two or three different Friday night services on a given sabbath and more than one kind of seder for Passover.

The Chicago program offers a wide var-

[Continued on next page]

## JUNE BRUNCH MEETING WILL BE AT TEMPLE SHOLOM THIS YEAR

### Those Wishing To Eat Must Make Reservations

The Society's annual brunch meeting will be held this year at Temple Sholom on Sunday, June 8. Admission to the meeting will be restricted, as in the past, to CJHS members in good standing, and will also feature a musical program and election of members to the board of directors.

An interesting program of musical selections will be presented by Jeffery Klepper, the cantor of Beth Emet Congregation of Evanston. The slate of candidates for directors will be offered by Sol Brandzel, chairman of the nominating committee.

The lavish brunch, subsidized in part by Society funds, will cost members \$6.00 and start at 11:00 AM. Advance reservations are required and should be made using the coupon in the mailing which will be sent to all members in May.

Members in good standing not wishing the brunch may arrive at 12:30 PM for the program and meeting itself.

### Work of Hillel Foundation

[Continued from previous page]

iety of emphases including serving kosher meals, working for Soviet Jews, assisting Israel, giving sabbath dinners, providing counseling services and studying Judaism. Rabbi Leifer indicated that decision-making has shifted noticeably from the staff to involved students and faculty with the various groups within the chapter typically raising funds of their own. Other activities center around Jewish-Christian relations, contact with other Jewish groups and countering the appeal of far-out religious cults seeking Jewish adherents.

He also sketched a portrait of today's Jewish student as being concerned with the material and the spiritual, more politically conservative, highly interested in making a living, some quite assertive and positive in their Jewishness and others quite "laid back" and without much emotional involvement.

#### Student Perplexities

Among the perplexities of Jewish stu-

## Third Seder Tradition of Labor Zionists Marks Thirtieth Year

This Passover marks the thirtieth anniversary of an unusual tradition in the Chicago Jewish community. The annual Third Seder of the Labor Zionist Alliance is an event which Chicago can proudly claim as unique because of the special Haggadah which is written anew each year to reflect current themes or milestones in Jewish life.

Combined with passages from the traditional Haggadah, this blending of old and new creates a most appropriate atmosphere for a meaningful communal celebration of Passover according to Clare Greenberg, who has co-authored many of the yearly editions. Past Haggadahs have focused on themes such as Bialik, the national poet; the 100th anniversary of modern aliyah; a tribute to Golda Meir; the Warsaw Ghetto uprising; the kibbutz; and the reunification of Jerusalem. The Thirtieth Anniversary Haggadah is devoted to David Ben-Gurion, the founding father of Israel, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of his birth.

Interest in these Haggadahs has been expressed by Harvard University, Tel Aviv University and numerous organizations all over the country. Spertus Library has a complete collection.

Begun in 1957 by the late Peretz Tautman, a leading Chicago Labor Zionist, the unusual format of the seder program, which includes music, poetry and readings in English, Yiddish and Hebrew, has met with great enthusiasm by many in the Chicago Jewish community.

---

dents he mentioned searching for a meaningful way to be Jewish, intermarriage, broken homes, adapting to urban life and fear that they will not match the success of their parents. He was hopeful that Hillel, as a broadly conceived spiritual center where Jews of all varieties can mingle with mutual respect, can meaningfully assist students with their present problems and prepare them for their future ones.

The appreciative audience made up in enthusiasm and approval for smaller than usual attendance. President Norman Schwartz presided at the meeting and Program Chairman Burt Robin introduced the speakers.

--I.J.S.

## ABOUT THE SOCIETY

The Chicago Jewish Historical Society was founded in 1977 and is in part an outgrowth of local Jewish participation in the American Bicentennial celebrations of 1976. It has as its purpose the discovery, preservation and dissemination of information concerning the Jewish experience in the Chicago area.

To this end the Society seeks out, collects and preserves appropriate written, spoken and photographic records; publishes historical information; holds meetings at which various aspects of Chicago Jewish history are discussed; and offers tours of historical Jewish sites. Muriel Robin was the founding president.

Membership in the Society includes a subscription to Society News, discounts on other Society publications and at the Spertus Museum Store, information about Society meetings and other activities, and the opportunity to learn and inform others concerning Chicago Jewish history and its preservation.

Membership in the Chicago Jewish Historical Society is open to all interested persons and organizations. The membership year is from January to December; however, non-members may join at any time.

Committees currently active and seeking members include Oral History, Archives, Exhibits, Photography and the Speakers Bureau. Requests for additional information and membership inquiries may be addressed to our office (Phone 663-5634). We welcome your membership and active participation.

## JOINING THE SOCIETY

### Annual Dues Categories

Regular Membership . . . . .	\$15.00
Senior Citizens & Students . . . . .	10.00
Sustaining Membership. . . . .	25.00
Patron Membership. . . . .	50.00
Sponsoring Membership. . . . .	at least 100.00
Synagogue & Organization Membership. . . . .	at least 25.00

Make checks payable to the Chicago Jewish Historical Society and mail to our office at 618 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60605.

# society news

Society News is published by the Chicago Jewish Historical Society at 618 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60605. Telephone (312)663-5634. Editorial inquiries should be directed to the editor at (312)348-2800.

President. . . . . Norman D. Schwartz  
Editor . . . . . Irwin J. Suloway

### Editorial Board

Marian Cutler, Mark Mandle  
Burt Robin, Sidney Sorokin, Elaine Suloway

Look to the rock from which you were hewn  
חביונו אל-צור חצבתם



chicago jewish historical society  
618 SOUTH MICHIGAN . CHICAGO , ILLINOIS . 60605

FIRST CLASS MAIL