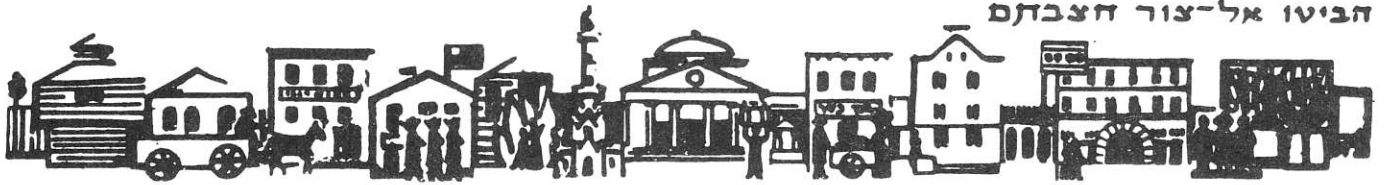


Look to the rock from which you were born  
הביטו אל-צור חצבתם



# chicago jewish historical society

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## society news

VOLUME VIII, NUMBER 2

DECEMBER, 1984

### IT'S TIME TO RENEW MEMBERSHIP AND INSURE CONTINUATION OF BENEFITS

It's that time again! Readers are reminded that most memberships in the Society lapse at the end of the year and must be renewed in order to remain in good standing. Only those who have joined CJHS since last July have expiration dates other than January 1, 1985.

The many benefits of membership include a subscription to Society News, meeting notices, discounts on summer day tours and Spertus Museum purchases, admission to closed meetings and free or reduced admission to other events of Jewish historical interest. Treasurer Sol Brandzel urges members to renew within the next few weeks to insure continuation of benefits.

Dues may be paid using the coupon on page eleven of this issue of Society News or renewal forms about to be sent in the mail. Regular annual dues begin at \$15.00 with senior citizens and students paying \$10.00. A full schedule of dues appears on page twelve of this issue.

### An Opportunity for YOU To Become An Oral History Interviewer

Would you like to converse with an important person in local Jewish history and at the same time preserve his knowledge and insight for the benefit of future Chicago Jews? Such opportunity may well be yours if you choose to become an interviewer in the Society's Oral History Program.

We are looking for volunteers to tape interviews with individuals whose background or experience indicates that their reminiscences should be preserved as a part of Chicago Jewish history. There are only two requirements to be met before you too can have the interesting opportunity to chat with Chicago's past.

You must agree to attend one training session, and you must have access to a tape recorder.

If you are able to meet these requirements, the Society will furnish tape and arrange for you to interview and tape someone on our waiting list of men and

[Continued on page 2]

OPEN MEETING, SUNDAY AFTERNOON, DECEMBER 9

A Camp Inmate, A Partisan Fighter, & A Liberator

Discuss

LOCAL MEMORIES OF THE HOLOCAUST

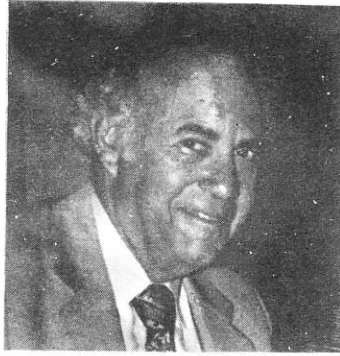
At Spertus College, 618 South Michigan Avenue

See Page Three for Details

Refreshments at 1:00 PM

Free Admission

Program at 2:00 PM



President Schwartz

### Three Members Attend Workshops on Conservation of Historic Materials

The Illinois Cooperative Conservation Program, housed at the Morris Library of Southern Illinois University, gave workshops throughout the state during the month of September. CJHS Archives Chairman Elsie Orlinsky attended the day-long session in Oak Park. Board Members Janet Hagerup and Moselle Schwartz attended the session at the Lake County Museum, situated in the Lakewood Forest Preserve in Wauconda, Illinois. Attendees came from universities, museums and local historical societies in northern Illinois.

The ICCP helps libraries maintain general circulating collections and is dedicated to helping protect and preserve historic materials in Illinois libraries and historical repositories. It accomplishes this not only through workshops, but also through its information and consulting service and through its publications.

Presentations on conservation management, cleaning, de-acidification, encapsulation and the use of tools in a kit provided to each attendee were included in the workshop. It was suggested that a "hands on" approach, with regard to actual conservation techniques, be utilized at a future workshop. --Janet Hagerup

### Oral History (cont'd)

[Continued from page 1]  
women to be recorded. The tapes and transcripts become permanent parts of Chicago's Jewish history and are consulted by students and scholars--and you are given credit as the all-important interviewer.

Interested persons should get in touch with the Oral History Co-Chairmen, Dr. Adele Hast or Sidney Sorkin at 221-4096. They'll love the experience.

### President's Message

#### Concentration Camp Inmates Sought To Preserve Historical Records

A spokesman for the Holocaust Survivors Foundation, another Holocaust survivor, and a concentration camp liberator will conduct a discussion at the Sunday, December 9, meeting of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society. You won't want to miss this informative and moving experience.

I thought of this program as I was reading The War Against the Jews 1933-1945 by Lucy S. Dawidowicz. In Chapter 12, The Alternative Community, she tells us that in 1942 in the Warsaw Ghetto "a secret Jewish archive was established under the code name ONEG SHABBAT....Its purpose...was to gather 'material and documents relating to the martyrology of the Jews in Poland'."

If our people, then struggling under such traumatic circumstances, had this compelling sense of history, surely we, living in freedom, should be able to devote some of our energy to preserving our own history. I am convinced that we too can "stimulate the production of diaries, chronicles, [journals, letters, photographs], all sorts of descriptive and analytic writings on every phase of Jewish life" in Chicago.

Please call us. We will tell you how you can help.

Norman D. Schwartz

### Society Welcomes New Members

The Society welcomes the following new members who have joined during the late summer and early fall. Their membership indicates a desire to assist in the preservation of Chicago's Jewish heritage and to participate in the many interesting and entertaining activities of our organization.

Annabel Abraham  
Elizabeth Baum  
Russell Blender  
Phyllis Eisenberg  
Reva Gamburg  
Allan & Norma Goldberg  
Allan & Sandra Goodkind  
Jeanne Brown Gordon  
Esther Hershman  
Roberta Hoffman  
Lillian B. Jaffe

Jerry Knight  
Ronald S. Miller  
Ner Tamid Congregation  
Dr. & Mrs. Jerome Reich  
Rose Resnick  
George & Esther Sackheim  
Rose Sagalavich  
Cecile R. Scriapio  
Dr. Jack Shean  
Doreen Weiss  
Carole Wexler

Marion Cutler  
Membership Chairman

## PANEL TO DISCUSS HOLOCAUST HISTORY AT DECEMBER 6 MEETING

### Local Survivor, Partisan Fighter, And Liberator in Panel Discussion

The direct involvement of Chicagoans with Holocaust experiences will be the subject of the Society's Sunday, December 9, meeting at Spertus College of Judaica. A panel composed of a former inmate of Auschwitz, an underground partisan fighter, and an American involved in the liberation of survivors will address members and friends at the open meeting.

Refreshments will be served beginning at 1:00 P.M. and the program will begin at 2:00 P.M. The meeting will be held in Bederman Hall of the College at 618 South Michigan Avenue. There is no admission charge.

#### A Panel of Experts

The panel will include Regina Lipman, former Auschwitz inmate and president of the Holocaust Survivors Memorial Foundation of Illinois; Lisa Derman, former partisan fighter whose public appearances have impressed audiences of all ages; and Colonel Oscar Lifshutz, a retired Jewish chaplain who played a part in the liberation and rehabilitation of survivors. Coordinating the panel will be Burt Robin, CJHS program chairman.

#### The Concentration Camp Inmate

Mrs. Lipman was born in Lodz, Poland, and experienced the wartime ghetto there under the Nazis before being sent to Auschwitz, where she worked as a slave laborer. The only survivor of her family, she came to the United States in 1946. She is a resident of Lincolnwood and the mother of two children.

#### The Underground Partisan

Mrs. Derman, born in Raczkki on the Polish-Prussian border, was forced to move to Western Poland where she spent her teen-age years in Nazi-run ghettos in Slonim, Grodno and Wilno. She and the man who later became her husband escaped to become partisans in the woods near Wilno until liberated by the Russians in 1944. She was reunited with surviving members of her family in Chicago in 1947. Now the mother of three children, she lives in

Skokie.

#### The Liberator and Rehabilitator

Rabbi Lifshutz is familiar to Society members as the retired army colonel who spoke of life as a chaplain (and as a rabbinical student in Chicago between the wars) at a CJHS meeting in 1982. At the time of that popular presentation a member of the audience was heard to remark upon leaving, "I could listen to him all day." His chaplaincy included much direct involvement with freed concentration camp inmates immediately after the war.

The Holocaust Survivors Memorial Foundation of Illinois, which Mrs. Lipman heads, is an organization of survivors and other interested persons and is dedicated to the preservation of records, publications and the collective memory of the Holocaust horror with the view toward preventing its repetition. Its important role will also be discussed at the December 9 meeting.

### Society Acquires History of Philanthropist Max Adler's Family

Alerted by a friend of the Society, CJHS has secured for the Chicago Jewish Archives a history of the family of Max and Sophie Adler. The book was donated by its author, their son Robert S. Adler.

The son wrote the history in an effort to answer questions of Wendy, a great-granddaughter of his. Max Adler was one of Chicago's most prominent philanthropists as was his brother-in-law, Julius Rosenwald. The Adler Planetarium was one of Max Adler's generous gifts to the city in the early years of this century. His brother-in-law, of course, later gave a larger gift to the city in the form of the Museum of Science and Industry.

The volume on the Adler family contains a genealogical chart of all lineal descendants, a history of each person arranged by generation and photographs and copies of letters and newspaper clippings.

Elsie Orlinsky, CJHS Archives Chairman, remarked that the Society is fortunate to have acquired this superb volume and expressed gratitude to Mrs. Eve Levin, secretary to Robert Adler, who provided information leading to its donation.

## COOK COUNTY HOSPITAL COLLEAGUES CONTINUE TO HONOR MEMORY OF REFUGEE PHYSICIAN SLAIN BY BERSERK PATIENT IN 1956

### Medical Library Named After Promising Young Intern

By Terrence S. Norwood

In 1981, Cook County Hospital observed the twenty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the Dr. Bruno Eric Epstein Intern Achievement Award. Better known as the "Intern of the Year Award," it was begun in memory of Dr. Epstein, who was fatally stabbed by an outpatient on February 22, 1956.

As the hospital archivist I was asked to give a brief talk on the history of the award at the annual awards dinner held on June 25, 1981. My remarks were later published in the hospital's Pharmacy Newsletter. Because Dr. Epstein's Jewish faith was largely responsible for his being at Cook County Hospital, I thought his sad story would be of interest to the members of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society. I have, therefore, revised the article and included new information for publication in Society News.

#### Story Begins in Vienna

Prior to World War II, Vienna, Austria, was home to a large Jewish population and it was here that Julius Epstein was born on August 20, 1893. He obtained a Doctor of Laws degree from the University of Vienna and, around 1922, began a legal career. In 1928, he married Edith Pollacsek. Their only child, Bruno Eric, was born on February 21, 1931. In January of 1933, Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany, and one of his major goals was the annexation of Austria. This was accomplished in March of 1938 and led to the Nazi persecution of Austrian Jews.

In August of 1939, several weeks before the start of World War II in Europe, the Epsteins emigrated to the United States. They settled in Chicago and Julius Epstein began a new career as a cashier with the Geller Drug Company. Mrs. Epstein, a graduate of the Imperial Academy of Music in Vienna, gave piano lessons. They worked hard and saved their money so that Bruno could have a good education. He attended Roosevelt High School, received a B.A. (with honors) in Biological Sciences

from the University of Chicago in 1951, and was awarded an M.D. from Northwestern University Medical School in 1955.

#### Begins Internship at County Hospital

On July 1, 1955, Dr. Bruno Epstein began a one-year internship at Cook County Hospital. To learn what Dr. Epstein was like as a person, I contacted several of his fellow interns. According to Dr. Marvin Mishkin of St. Louis, "Bruno...was a very bright young man. He was very friendly and I recall him as being an exceedingly hardworking house officer." Dr. Burton A. Russman of Chicago, who also attended medical school with Dr. Epstein, said he was "...a very studious individual with a good sense of humor, well liked...by his fellow classmates...."

One interesting description of Dr. Epstein was provided by Dr. Roger A. Ott of Dubuque, Iowa: "He was a very likeable fellow, short in stature, and wore the usual Cook County intern's uniform, which consisted of a borrowed white shirt and tattered white pants, patched over and over, many times. I remember following him back to the hospital after lunch on a number of occasions, and a stethoscope usually dangled from his right rear pocket."

#### Dissatisfied Patient Seeks Revenge

During part of his internship, Dr. Epstein was assigned to Ward 24 (Male Surgery). On January 6, 1956, Jim Go, a Chinese-American laborer, was admitted to the ward for repair of a ventral hernia. This was done on January 27, and Go was released on February 9. Go continued to experience much pain and believed that he was going to die. He, therefore, decided to kill one or two of the doctors who had treated him. One of these was Dr. Epstein.

Washington's Birthday, February 22, was a holiday and Dr. Epstein was not scheduled to work. Another doctor wanted the day off to visit his family, so Dr. Epstein agreed to work in his place. Earlier that day, Jim Go had purchased two six-inch butcher knives. In the afternoon, he went to Ward 24 and asked to see Dr. Epstein. Since Dr. Epstein was not on the ward at that time, Go was asked to wait in the hall.





Dr. Bruno Epstein--a tragic footnote to local Jewish history.

### Stabbed with Butcher Knife

When Dr. Epstein returned, he and a surgical resident met with Go to discuss his problem. Dr. Epstein tried to find a vacant examining room but all were in use, so he told Go to again wait in the hall. Thinking that he was being denied treatment, Go became angry and yelled, "You cut me! Now I cut you!" He then pulled a knife and stabbed Dr. Epstein in the chest and the abdomen. A struggle ensued as a male and a female nurse tried to get the knife away from Go. A resident physician finally subdued him by hitting him over the head with a chair. Other doctors tried to save Dr. Epstein, but he died around 3:30 P.M.

At an inquest the next day, a coroner's jury returned a murder verdict against Go and recommended that he be held for the grand jury. Go was taken to a cell in the psychiatric tier at the Cook County Jail, where he hanged himself on February 28.

The death of Dr. Epstein was, according to Dr. Russman, "...a sincere shock to everybody that knew him. His family had had many other difficulties and this was yet another tragedy in their lives." Dr. Karl A. Meyer, medical superintendent of the hospital, wrote to an employee of the Geller Drug Company, "I knew this young man very well as he was on my service during part of his training. He was a very industrious and intelligent young man, and certainly all of us are depress-

ed by such an accident. No one knows better than I do the grief a father and mother must feel at his loss."

### Setting Up a Memorial Fund

A Bruno Epstein Memorial Fund was started by several interns and residents. Dr. Mishkin states, "I cannot recall whose idea it was to do something in his memory, but I do remember that we were all interested in participating in some type of memorial...." At a medical staff meeting on April 2, 1956, Dr. Isadore Pilot was asked to draw up a plan for a suitable memorial. Dr. Pilot suggested "a memorial in the form of an annual achievement award to a resident or intern at County who had been outstanding in his work and the care of the patients."

His plan was approved and in June of 1957 two plaques were dedicated in Karl Meyer Hall. One was in memory of Dr. Epstein and the other was to be inscribed with the names of the recipients of the Dr. Bruno Eric Epstein Intern Achievement Award.

In order for contributions to the Epstein Memorial Fund to be tax-deductible, Dr. Pilot suggested that it be sponsored by the Hektoen Institute for Medical Research of the Cook County Hospital and by the Phi Delta Epsilon Foundation of Chicago. The fund collected nearly \$3,000. This was used to purchase the plaques in Meyer Hall and plaques to be presented to the award recipients. Occasionally, monetary gifts of about \$100 were also presented to the recipients.

### First Award Given in 1956

The first award was presented to Dr. Ott on June 26, 1956. According to Dr. Ott, "My wife had scheduled a couple to come for dinner on the Award night, so I did not plan to attend the dinner. During the evening, I received a call from Dr. George Blaha to make a hurry-up trip down to the Karl Meyer Hall. When I reached the dining hall, I was informed I was the first recipient of the Bruno Epstein Achievement Award, much to my surprise and amazement. The plaque was accompanied by a check for \$125, which in those days was extremely appreciated because our monthly salary was \$25."

When the award began, physicians were trained under a rotating internship which consisted of three months in Medicine,

[Continued on page 7]

## THE SELF-HELP HOME FOR THE AGED: AN UNUSUAL FACILITY CREATED TO HOUSE VICTIMS OF NAZI PERSECUTION

The story of the tragic death of young Chicagoan Dr. Bruno Epstein and its aftermath, which appears elsewhere in this issue, includes the fact that his father, currently aged 91 years, lives in the Self-Help Home for the Aged on Chicago's north side.

Reference to the Self-Help Home reminded the editor that few of our readers are aware of this unique institution or the role that it plays in Chicago Jewish history. He therefore enlisted the assistance of the home's longtime executive director, Dorothy Becker, who kindly assisted in the preparation of the accompanying article.

The large number of Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany who began arriving in Chicago (and elsewhere in the United States) in the middle 1930's were an energetic and gifted group. They almost immediately became self-supporting and developed religious and communal institutions of their own. Among these none is more vital or typical of this achievement than the Self-Help Home for the Aged at 908-20 Argyle Street.

Its genesis and its fine record of service in the provision of a then highly unusual facility for senior citizens form an important chapter in Chicago Jewish history.

### Outgrowth of Refugee Organization

What is today an impressive home for aged victims of Nazi persecution who became residents of greater Chicago had its origins in a different sort of organization first founded in another part of the country.

Self-Help for Emigres from Central Europe was founded in New York in 1936 by a distinguished group of German refugees as a mutual aid society concerned with employment possibilities, housing assistance, help for the sick, child-care and even the exchange of clothing among recent Jewish refugees. Two years later a Self-Help of Chicago was established under the leadership of Dr. Walter Friedlaender, then of the University of Chicago.

### Home Initially on South Side

In the years after the war, the leadership passed to Dr. William F. Becker and, as the refugees became more secure financially, the main focus of the organization changed to the provision of care for its elderly persons. In 1949 the Chicago Home for Aged Immigrants was founded. In 1951 it was renamed the Self-Help

Home for the Aged and moved into a converted mansion at 4949 Drexel Boulevard. There were initially 19 residents, but growth required the building of an addition in 1957, known as the Becker Wing.

Increased demand and changing neighborhoods caused the move to a newly-constructed building at 908 Argyle in 1963. There residents were housed in a modern, purpose-built structure. That same year, Dr. Becker's widow Dorothy assumed the executive directorship of the home, a position she still holds.

### What "Self-Help" Means

What made the home unusual from its earliest days was the self-help concept which enabled residents to lead independent lives in a caring group environment. They live in apartment settings, performing household tasks of cooking and cleaning to the extent they can and thus remain active individuals instead of becoming objects of care. This concept has since been widely imitated both locally and elsewhere.

Ten years ago, during the presidency of Frederick Aufrecht, funds were raised for an adjoining building, which enabled the Self-Help Home to raise its occupancy limit to 170. The top two floors of this nine-story building provide nursing facilities for those residents who need them. It is now Self-Help's plan to build an apartment addition to its present facilities in order to accommodate more residents.

### Maintains Independence and Self-Reliance

Throughout the years the home has continued to emphasize the self-help principle upon which it was created. This is typified both by the lives led by its residents and by the manner in which the home is operated and controlled. The not-for-profit organization which runs it is independent of the various "umbrella" organizations the Chicago Jewish community has created. Under its current president, Dr. Rolf A. Weil, the group continues to raise its own funds, manage its own affairs and exemplify the sturdy independence which has become the hallmark of Chicago's refugee community of the Thirties and Forties.

--Irwin J. Suloway

## Admission to the Self-Help Home

Please note that admission to the Self-Help Home for the Aged is carefully restricted to direct victims of the Nazi takeover in Germany and the rest of Europe. It is thus limited to Jews leaving Germany subsequent to the 1933 assumption of power by the Nazis and to concentration camp survivors.

Since there is already a waiting list of about 900 eligible individuals, the home is not currently able to accept additional applications.

## Slain Physician (cont'd)

[Continued from page 5]

three months in Surgery, and six months in the Specialties. During the 1960's and 1970's, this system was gradually replaced by a straight internship in which most physicians trained in only one medical specialty. As a result, it became increasingly difficult for the Medical Education Committee to choose only one recipient from among the various specialties. Therefore, in 1975, the Committee changed the award so that each department could choose a recipient. The number of recipients varied from five to eight per year.

### Difficulties Result in Changes

In the early 1980's, there were problems in several departments over the selection of recipients. After much discussion, the Medical Education Committee decided to discontinue the award and to find another method of honoring the memory of Dr. Epstein. On July 13, 1983, the Committee voted to name the former doctor's lounge in Meyer Hall in memory of Dr. Epstein. The lounge will be renovated for use by the hospital's medical library and dedicated at a future date. Since Dr. Epstein was an excellent student, this is an appropriate way for Cook County Hospital to honor him.

Edith Epstein died in 1975, but Julius Epstein still resides in Chicago. He now lives in the Self-Help Home for the Aged, and the Executive Director states that at 91 years he "is a remarkable man." So was his unfortunate son, whose years were far fewer.



Michael Karzen, who spoke at the September meeting on the contributions of local Jewish artists to the art world.  
Photo by Moselle A. Schwartz

## TALK, SLIDE SHOW ON ARTISTS PROVE POPULAR AT SEPTEMBER MEETING

Text of Informative Presentation Printed Elsewhere in This Issue

The contributions of local Jewish painters and sculptors were discussed and displayed to an interested audience at the Fall meeting of the Chicago Jewish Historical Society on September 16.

The Sunday afternoon gathering at Spertus College featured a survey of the works of Chicago Jewish artists during the past forty years given by Michael Karzen, president of the American Jewish Art Club. He followed his talk with a slide presentation of representative works by some of the artists mentioned.

The text of Mr. Karzen's talk is reproduced as a permanent record elsewhere in this issue of Society News.

The speaker was introduced by Program Chairman Burt Robin, and a brief question period followed the presentation. The usual pre-meeting refreshments were provided under the supervision of Hospitality Chairman Shirley Sorkin. President Norman Schwartz chaired the meeting.

Mr. Karzen, whose talk was informative, interesting and well-presented, discussed recent movements in art in a clear, non-technical manner. A distinguished artist himself, he is a product of the Art Institute and the University of Chicago and currently teaches at Clemente High School in Chicago.

--I.J.S.

## THREE GENERATIONS OF JEWISH ARTISTS CONTRIBUTE TO LOCAL ACHIEVEMENTS IN ART DURING PAST FORTY YEARS

Some Choose Jewish Subjects;  
Others Focus Interests Elsewhere

By Michael Karzen

The richness that is the Chicago Jewish contribution to the city's art is at best rather staggering and at the least very impressive.

A subject as broad and varied as the contributions of local Jewish artists since 1940 cannot be covered thoroughly in an attempt such as this. So I have selected several artists whose work reflects, in my view, a good deal of the best produced over the past forty years and more in this city.

### Three Generations of Artists

I have decided to break the group into three separate parts because we are considering essentially three different generations of artists. Though there is an overlapping of themes, dates, activities and preoccupations, each generation made its own unique statement, which was in great measure conditioned by the historic and cultural period in which it found itself. The images of, say, a Todros Geller and David Bekker grow out of an environment much closer to European and Judaic roots and differ substantially from the surreal images of an Irving Petlin or the humanistic concerns of a Leon Golub forty years later.

The Jewish contribution to Chicago art begins in the early and middle 1920's when a growing number of Jewish immigrant artists concluded or were in the midst of their training at the Art Institute of Chicago.

### Armin, Geller Blaze the Trail

Emil Armin, the oldest of the artists (he was born in Austria in 1883), studied at the Institute from 1916-20 after earlier part-time study and was active in a number of the early art movements of the 1920's. His rather primitive and naive, energetic style was much admired by his contemporaries.

Todros Geller, slightly younger (born in 1889 in the Ukraine) than Armin, studied at the Art Institute from 1918-1924.

These two artists effectively ushered in the involvement of the Jewish artist into the life of the city.

Geller, over the following decades until his death in 1949, was to become known as the dean of Chicago Jewish artists. His insistence on the reality of a Jewish art; the power of his personality; his studio on Pearson Street that attracted so many writers, artists and creative personalities; and his impressive teaching, which influenced such artists as Michell Siporin, Aaron Bohrod and Henry Simon, made his impact broad, profound and lasting.

### Producing "Jewish Art"

Together with Geller, Leon Garland, A. Raymond Katz and--a bit later--David Bekker form the group most committed to producing "Jewish Art," an art that they believed grew out of the historical experience of the Jew.

Most of the other artists of the time, though not denying their Jewish roots, were more concerned with developing their own personal styles and visions that ultimately would include some reference to Jewish thematic material and related ideas. Such artists as Sam Greenburg, Maurice and Louise Yochim, Emil Armin, Mitchell Siporin, Aaron Bohrod, Harry Mintz and William Schwartz moved in that direction.

### Jewish Groups Form

It should be noted that a sense of cultural identity felt by all the Jewish artists, sparked by a visit to the city of Abel Pann, a colleague of Boris Shatz, the founder of the Bazalel School of Art in Jerusalem, resulted in the formation of a group called "Around the Palette" in 1926. It was in this group that the artists would come together to discuss issues important to them.

Later still, in 1940, after the rise of Nazi Germany, the Jewish artists felt a renewed sense of cultural pride and renamed their group "The American Jewish Art Club." The club to this day holds exhibitions throughout the Chicago area and meets frequently for lively discussions with their membership and other artists.

### Artistic Paths Diverge in 1930's

Because of their varied temperaments



and interests, the artists of the 1930's assimilated different stylistic influences. Some were authentic expressionists revealing highly personalized reflections of reality, as in the case of Sam Greenburg. Others took on the look of the regionalist and social realism of the time. Aaron Bohrod, Mitchell Siporin and Harry Mintz are good examples of this interest.

The regionalist expressed a sense of national pride that focused on the small town and landscape of the Middle West. A somewhat kindred movement called social realism dealt with the economic, political and social ills of the urban and national scene. These latter two styles and concerns were readily apparent in the Federal government's W.P.A. mural program that employed hundreds of artists throughout the city in the 1930's.

#### Surrealism and Abstractionism

Still other artists moved toward a world of fantasy and the inner imagination. Formally called surrealism, their concerns were philosophical, psychological and provocative. Among the Chicago School's earliest Jewish artists, Henry Simon was to distinguish himself later through this artistic vision. Bohrod and Mintz would later develop further--into a neo-realist and surrealist in the case of Bohrod and a peripheral abstract-expressionist in the case of Mintz.

William S. Schwartz, an opera singer as well as an artist, combined a style partially derivative of the modern cubist synthesized with curious light effects, perhaps growing out of his theatrical background. Later, Schwartz was to develop the "symphonic abstracts" that were his response to the abstract-expressionist revolution of the 1940's.

#### Jewishness Manifest in Earlier Artists

These artists comprise the first generation of Chicago Jewish art: Armin, Geller, Garland, Bekker, Katz, Greenburg, the Yochims, Siporin, Mintz and Schwartz. They were different in expression, but as Geller might put it, their Jewishness was manifest in different ways throughout their work.

The next group of artists we will consider comprises what I have referred to as the second generation of Chicago Jewish artists. Some of them are a decade or so younger and rose to artistic maturity in

the 1950's or a little earlier. They, too, vary in their style and artistic vision.

#### Jewish Themes Become Less Prominent

Of the five artists in this group only one, Fred Rappaport, carries on the tradition of Geller, Bekker, Garland and Katz in that his major preoccupation is with Jewish ideas, history and thematic material. In a word, he celebrates our tradition.

Victor Perlmutter, another of the five, was in his early work (the late 40's and early 50's) much concerned with Jewish material. Using a cubistic style sometimes laced with a lyric expressionism, he created a wealth of works dealing with Jewish subjects. In his later style, cubism gave way to abstract expressionism and the work of the 1960's and early 1970's owes its major debt to this artistic philosophy.

#### A Pair of Artist-Teachers

Lillian Deson Fishbein and Ann Roman Siegel are two artists of the middle period who have exercised considerable influence not only as exceptionally creative artists whose work has had a wide and appreciative audience for nearly three decades but also because of their importance as teachers. Both Fishbein and Roman have taught privately for many years, and a number of important new talents have come from their classes.

Both of these artists are essentially figurative in their approach, though Roman went through and continues a long love affair with abstract expressionism. Fishbein's concerns revolve around humanistic, political and social issues; while Roman is primarily concerned with experimentation in media and visual imagery, though a fundamental humanistic optimism pervades her work. Both display a power and depth sometimes erroneously thought to be reserved for their male counterparts.

#### A Monumental Sculptor

Finally Milton Horn, the sole sculptor in the crowd, a Chicagoan since the later 1940's and a maker of public art that decorates municipal buildings as well as synagogue interiors and exteriors, brings to his art a powerful expressionistic style that emphasizes energy, movement, intensity, humanity and monumentality. A man of personal passion, articulateness

[Continued on page 10]

## Three Generations of Local Jewish Artists (cont'd)

[Continued from page 9]

and principle, Horn has written extensively about art and its meaning. His studio displays his commitment to public art in the grand historical tradition.

These artists, Rappaport, Perlmutter, Fishbein, Roman and Horn, comprise the second generation of Chicago Jewish artists.

### Artists of the Third Generation

Preeminent among the third generation of artists is Seymour Rosofsky, an artist, I believe, who stands at the summit not only among Chicago Jewish artists but above all his contemporaries. In my view, Seymour was the most important artist to come out of Chicago since the Second World War. Unfortunately, health problems terminated his life at the relatively young age of 56 in 1981. Rosofsky's extraordinary draughtsmanship coupled with a superb printing technique put to the service of a richly imaginative and learned intellect stamps him as a master among his peers.

The post-Second World War period has seen the rise in Chicago of a school of painting that places great emphasis on surreal-like or fantastic images. This preoccupation can be observed in the works of Irving Petlin, Curt Frankenstein and George Cohen. A graduate of the Art Institute, Petlin graduated in the middle 1950's from Tuley High School where Sam Greenburg was his teacher and has been successful in shows both here and in Europe since shortly thereafter.

### Surrealism Common Among Later Artists

Petlin lives in a world of haunting images who inhabit strange provocative landscapes and interiors. The enigmatic quality of the imagery further heightens the magical quality of these works. Sometimes these paintings seem strangely transfused with contemporary symbolic social and political significance as well.

Curt Frankenstein is still another of the artists concerned with the surreal image. Frankenstein utilizes political and social satire with genuine humor and wit. This artist's superb and astonishing imagination is beautifully revealed by his masterful technical skills.

And finally George Cohen, a professor of art at Northwestern University and prob-

ably the most intellectual of the group, a graduate of the Institute and the University of Chicago, also employs surreal, enigmatic and dream-like images in his richly perplexing, very painterly works.

### Concern with Public Problems Continues

When we turn to the work of Leon Golub and Leo Segedin, we see two artists whose concern for social, political and humanistic issues dominates their efforts. Golub, a Chicago native and teacher in the City Junior College system for a time in the middle 1950's, later moved to New York and has spent time in Europe during the intervening decades. His work was first shown nationally in 1958 at a very important return-to-the-figure exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Since then, he has shown extensively. Golub's concern is essentially man's decline. His works, done with a limited palette and heavy use of palette knife (the surface is often severely abused), show man as a bloodied and battered figure in a world going morally and spiritually bankrupt.

Segedin's concerns parallel Golub's; however, his canvases convey a more classical approach. His interest in space, color and textural surfaces give his works a lush, more pictorial quality than the Golub paintings. They, too, scream out to us of the human tragedy of our age. In his latest work, Segedin has moved toward a more philosophical, cooler, more intellectual posture. His work is, I believe, sadly unfamiliar to many art viewers and this is most unfortunate.

### Visual and Psychological Challenges

Rubin Steinberg is perhaps the most unusual of the contemporary artists we will see today. His work straddles the line between craft and fine art, between sculpture and painting. His works combine rope, leather, fibers, objects of all kinds and paint in curious relationships to each other. Sometimes almost surreal, sometimes purely experimental, there is a dry humor and satire that occasionally peeks out. A lover of surfaces and complexity, he challenges our total visual involvement.

Judith Roth, a rising star on the Chicago art scene, is a native of Boston who has lived in Chicago for more than twenty-

## Jewish Artists (concluded)

five years. In the past decade she has begun to build an enviable record for herself. Her wonderfully insightful expressionistic drawings have moved viewers in ever increasing numbers. A linear descendant of Kathe Kollwitz and even of Toulouse-Lautrec, she gives her work a probing psychological quality reminiscent of the best in figurative art. Her sensitive eye and expert hand reveal to us the essence of her studies and their essential humanity.

### A Unique Artistic Family

No presentation on Jewish artists in Chicago would be complete without speaking at least briefly about the considerable contributions of Jewish Chicago's first artistic family. Earlier this afternoon I spoke of Mitchell Siporin, one of the early leaders on the Chicago art scene. The Family Siporin has produced a splendid body of important work over the past forty years or so, and not all of it was produced by the gifted Mitchell. Jennie Siporin, the mother of the family, started her career in her sixties and received much praise and many awards for her primitive, yet sophisticated and colorful, paintings until her death in the early 1970's. Mitchell, after the Second World War, moved to the East Coast, where he worked and served as chairman and professor in the art department at Brandeis University for twenty years.

Shoshanna Siporin Hoffman (she calls herself Shoshanna and has, professionally, since the very beginning of her career) was the youngest of the artists to found the American Jewish Art Club in 1940. In her early twenties she was already showing in the Art Institute American shows and on the East Coast. A student of Boris Anisfield (Rosofsky and other Chicago artists studied with Anisfield in the 1940's) at the Art Institute, Shoshanna's very personal style suggests expressionistic elements with a love of color, a personal inventiveness and a remarkably intellectual and reflective mind.

Shoshanna's son, Joshua, is a young, dynamic sculptor in New York who has just completed a three-year Rockefeller Fellowship and is engaged in a number of important commissions. It is quite evident that the Siporin/Hoffman family is somewhat

special in the Chicago art world.

The third generation of Jewish artists in Chicago thus consists of Rosofsky, Petlin, Frankenstein, Cohen, Segedin, Golub, Steinberg, Roth and Shoshanna.

### Recording Local Jewish Art History

One final word. I would like to conclude with a few more words about Louise and Maurice Yochim. Both distinguished teachers and artists for nearly forty years, Louise concluded her career as a consultant for the Chicago Board of Education and Maurice as a professor of art at Northeastern Illinois University.

In recent years, Louise has written extensively about Chicago Jewish artists. These articles have appeared in the Sentinel Magazine. She has also written a volume on the role of the Chicago Society of Artists and is presently completing a book on Jewish Art in the United States, with a chapter devoted to the Chicago scene. I have had the pleasure of reading her material and using some of it in this presentation. This remarkable woman is performing a noble and valuable task--one which the Jewish community will come to praise and treasure as the years go on. We are all in her debt.

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